RP expels Iraqi diplomat for terror links with Abus

Story on PAGE A2

Bush calls up GMA, hails stance on Iraq

By Carlito Pablo

FOR TAKING the United States' hardline position against Iraq, President Macapagal-Arroyo received an appreciative phone call from US President George W. Bush Tuesday night.

Bush pledged additional military aid to the Philippines apart from extending his compliments to Ms Macapagal, her

BUSH/ A18

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Thursday, February 13, 2003 ★★ 60 pages 6 sections vol. 18 no. 67 P15

Bin Laden to Iraqis: Launch suicide attacks

DUBAI/WASHINGTON—Osama bin Laden has taken center stage in the Iraq crisis with the release of a voice tape in which the terrorist leader exhorted Iraqis to carry out suicide attacks against Americans and draw US troops into combat in Iraqi cities.

The United States, eager to bolster support for war against Saddam Hussein, said the audio tape broadcast by the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera satellite television station proved the Iraqi leader's ties to the al-Qaida terror network.

The tape thrust Bin Laden and al-Qaida, blamed for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks that killed about 3,000 people in the United States, into the middle of the showdown over Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction as serious divisions deepened on the issue between Washington and three major powers—France, Germany and Russia.

Nato ambassadors are due to meet for a third day on Wednesday to overcome one of the most serious crisis in the alliance's 54-year history amid mounting pressure on France, Germany and Belgium to stop blocking allied plans to protect Turkey in case of war in Iraq.

US officials said the tape was probably genuine, the strongest evidence so far that Bin Laden survived the US-led war in Afghanistan to drive out the Taliban and al-Qaida. His whereabouts remain a mystery.

BIN LADEN/ A18

THE POPE at the Vatican carries candle for peace.

REUTERS

GMA: Resume attacks

Senators reject bank waivers on secrecy

By Clarissa S. Batino, Gerald G. Lacuarta and Cynthia Balana

SENATORS want to insert a provision in the Anti-Money Laundering Law (Amla) seeking to prohibit banks from turning down clients who refuse to sign a waiver of their right to secrecy of deposits.

Three of them yesterday took turns recounting their bad experiences with Citibank N.A. which had refused to open an account for their relatives without the waiver.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said his stepdaughter, who doesn't even carry his surname, was turned down by the American bank. A daughter of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta and a sister of Sen. Sergio Osmeña had the same experience.

The senators came up with the proposal a day after they raised a howl over a watchlist of depositors that includes politicians and government officials to be closely monitored by banks.

The watchlist led to the sus-

SENATORS/ A4

THE CALM after the bombing of transmission towers in Pikit, North Cotabato, descends upon a farmer working his ricefield. VAL HANDUMON

Gov't to pursue peace talks with MILF amid clashes

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE ADMINISTRATION of President Macapagal-Arroyo will pursue peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front despite the fighting in North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

"My government is committed to achieving a peace settlement with the MILF," the President yesterday said, and expressed hope that a peace agreement would be signed within the first half of the year.

But she added: "I emphasize, however, that my government is duty-bound to uphold the rule of law and to neutralize all armed criminal elements in Mindanao wherever they may be."

The President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye confirmed that the peace negotiations would continue. He said formal talks were expected to resume as soon as the President approved the final peace agreement draft that the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security approved Monday.

"She has not given the go-signal although we believe that this agreement will be approved eventually," Bunye said.

The President yesterday recalled her "ceasefire" order of Tuesday and allowed the military to resume its assault on a thou-

GOV'T/A19

MILF fails to attend ceasefire meeting

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Martin P. Marfil
in Manila

PIKIT, North Cotabato—Fighting resumed between government troops and Moro guerrillas a minute after midnight yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo's ceasefire order issued Tuesday having lapsed.

This was announced by Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya after a closed-door meeting with military commanders here yesterday.

But earlier in the day, Eid Kabalu, spokesperson of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said soldiers were continuing to attack rebel positions despite the President's order to stop the offensive.

"We thought she is the commander-in-chief. How come nobody is listening to her order?" Kabalu said.

In Manila, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes justified the renewed offensive—to "capture and occupy" the Buliok Complex

GMA/ A19

Step aside Marikina, Cebu's bulldog here

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

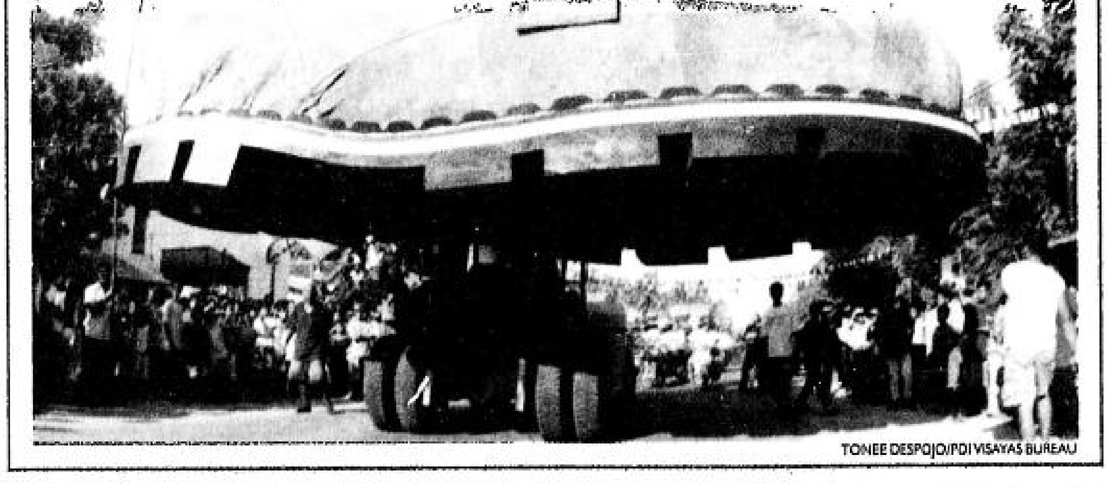
CEBU CITY—Step aside, Marikina City.

A town in southern Cebu is sizing up Metro Manila's "Shoe Capital" by stomping its own giant footprint in the shoe making industry with its creation of the world's biggest pair of shoes.

Shoe manufacturers in Carcar, about 40 km south of this city, are now in the thick of activities to produce a pair of giant shoes with bulldog or high, bulging toes in an attempt to beat Marikina's entry that made it to the Guinness Book of World Records last year.

STEP/ A4

REUTERS



SHOETIME, folks: Sizing up Marikina's produce (above) that's 5.5 meters long, 2.5 meters wide and 1.83 meters high, the Carcar shoemakers handcrafted footwear that's longer, wider and higher.

TONEE DESPOJO/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

GMA tries to bridge looming split of Fil-Chinese traders

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A BREWING crisis that could divide the politically influential Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCI) may have been averted with the intervention of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The President hosted a dinner for taipan Lucio Tan in Malacañang Tuesday night to convince the acknowledged FFCCCI kingmaker to support incumbent president John K.C. Ng in his bid for another two-year term in the chambers' bi-annual election next month.

Tan and Ng are in-laws with Tan's son married to Ng's daughter.

But Tan is reportedly backing his high school classmate, FFCCCI executive vice pres-

GMA/ A19

MAG VALENTINES NAMAN KAYO, PLEASE!

Singapore: Where love is gone

SINGAPORE—The Singapore government, anxious to remedy a worsening baby shortage, has launched a fresh campaign to encourage people to fall in love, get married and start families.

The month-long "Romancing Singapore" campaign run by government agencies and private business is timed to

SINGAPORE/ A18

SSS increases rates by 12% starting March

By Clarissa S. Batino

STARTING next month, the Social Security System will raise the contributions of its 23 million members by 12 percent from 8.4 percent to 9.4 percent of their basic pay. But the increase, the first in 22 years, will be shouldered by employers.

Malacañang approved the increase last week to help solve the pension fund's actuarial deficit and restore its financial health, SSS president and chief executive officer Corazon de la Paz said.

The SSS said it would spare employees the burden and placed the increase in contributions solely on the shoulders of employers.

Of the 8.4 percent, the share of employees

SSS/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/13/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Second FrontPage

Veritas pulls plug on Linggoy

JOSE Luiz "Linggoy" Alcuaz, the self-appointed corruption watchdog. of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office where he serves as one of the directors, is crying foul over the suspension of his daily program over Radio Veritas.

He accused PCSO chair Ma. Livia 'Honey Girl" de Leon of being behind the suspension. The PCSO is the program's sponsor.

De Leon is the perennial target of Alcuaz's so-called "exposés" on alleged multimillion-peso anomalies in the agency.

Alcuaz said the Veritas management had ordered the suspension of his 15-minute radio program "Mga Punto de Bista ni Linggoy" which airs at 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays.

He said he received the suspension order on Monday night from station manager Melo Acuña, who said Alcuaz violated the rule of fairness and balance.

Alcuaz called the action a "suppression of press freedom and my constitutional right to free speech."

Iraqi envoy ousted for terrorist links

AN IRAQI diplomat accused of consorting with Muslim terrorists has been expelled and asked to leave the country by Friday.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople yesterday said he had withdrawn the accreditation of Iraqi Embassy second secretary Husham Hussain, whom he earlier linked to Abu Sayyaf rebels blamed for a bomb blast in Zamboanga that killed an American soldier and three Filipinos last October.

Hussain had also been meeting with "some front organizations" of the National Democratic Front—the political wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines—at the Iraqi Embassy in Manila, Ople said, citing a report of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica).

On Tuesday, the Iraqi mission denied the allegations against Hussain and demanded proof. Oplé said: "This matter does not depend on whether he's (guilty) or not. It is the prerogative of a sovereign government like the Philippines."

In Butuan City, Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane told reporters the PNP had in its possession a mobile phone that would prove an Abu Sayyaf operative was in contact with Hussain during the October 2002 blast.

And in Zamboanga City, Abu Sayyaf leader Jose Ramirez, also known as Hamsiraji Sali, admitted that his group regularly received support and instructions from allies in Iraq. But he did not say if Hussain was one of those allies.

Yesterday, charge d'affaires Samir Bolus accepted Ople's request for the diplomat's departure and expressed hopes that the incident would not compromise Philippine-Iraqi relations.

Ople said he did not foresee a rift—especially in the wake of a new Iraqi ambassador's arrival to the country—unless one partner jeopardized "this excellent relationship."

It was not the first time an Iraqi diplomat had been implicated in a bomb attack. In 1991, embassy first secretary Mowaffaq Jassim Al-Ani, was expelled over similar accusations.

Intelligence officials said Al-Ani was monitored to have made calls to two alleged Iraqi terrorists on a mission to bomb the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center in Manila. The bomb went off prematurely, killing the two suspects outside the US facility.

Al-Ani is the new Iraqi ambassador to China.

Ople said the government would share with the US and other allies intelligence information on the alleged Hussain-Abu link.

Sen. Manny Villar, chair of the foreign relations committee, announced that he would suminon Nica officials to explain the report. He vowed to cut the agency's budget if its information was proven inaccurate.

He recalled intelligence reports last November on alleged "explicit and credible" threats of attacks on the Australian and Canadian embassies, which prompted the two missions to close down temporarily. *Norman Bordadora, Cynthia D. Balana, Julie S. Alipala and Franklin M. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau, with AFP and Reuters reports*

FBI agents on trail of fugitive RP cops

By Philip C. Tubeza

INVESTIGATORS know where in the United States fugitive former police superintendents Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao are hiding, according to National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

Wycoco said yesterday Aquino and Mancao, charged for the double murder of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in November 2000, were being tracked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Witness Supt. Glen Dumlao had tagged Aquino and Mancao in the brutal kidnap-slay of Dacer and Corbito, along with several other members of the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, headed by then PNP Chief Panfilo Lacson, now a senator.

"They are in the continental United States. Our counterparts there are helping us monitor them," Wycoco said.

Aquino shuttles between New York and San Francisco and Mancao between Seattle and San Francisco, according to Wycoco. "They usually meet in San Francisco," he said.

He added the NBI was confident that the US government would reply favorably to the Philippines' request that Aquino and Mancao be deported to Manila.

"This is naturally a deportation case since they are now undocumented and undesirable aliens," Wycoco said, calling attention to the Department of Foreign Affairs' cancellation of the former police officers' passports on Aug. 3, 2001.

Wycoco noted the US was far stricter today in dealing with undocumented aliens than before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The NBI sent a letter to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service at the US Embassy on Tuesday asking that Aquino and Mancao be deported.

Wycoco said it might take a while for the Americans to respond since the request had to be forwarded to Washington.

Wycoco also appealed anew to the Supreme Court to hasten the resolution of the late Chief Supt. Teofilo Viña's petition.

Viña had opposed his name's inclusion in the Dacer-Corbito case charge sheet, along with those of Aquino's and Mancao's.

Labor leaders back Ping

By Donna S. Cueto

MODERATE labor groups boasting a membership of 200,000 workers yesterday formed a campaign movement for Sen. Panfilo Lacson, pushing him to run for president in 2004.

Calling their movement, "Labor for Lacson," labor leaders from three labor centers, 25 labor federations, three national unions, five industry alliances and 219 local unions banded together to campaign for Lacson, whom they claimed knew nothing about their actions.

They portrayed Lacson as the "champion for the toiling masses," using a campaign line akin to that of former President Estrada.

"Senator Ping Lacson is the workers' man! Senator Ping Lacson is our man!" it added.

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AMAIIT FAILED TO DISCLOSE THAT THE FRANCHISEE, RIDC TELECOM, HAS A STANDING FRANCHISE BOND MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO COVER ALL CLAIMS, REAL OR IMAGINED.
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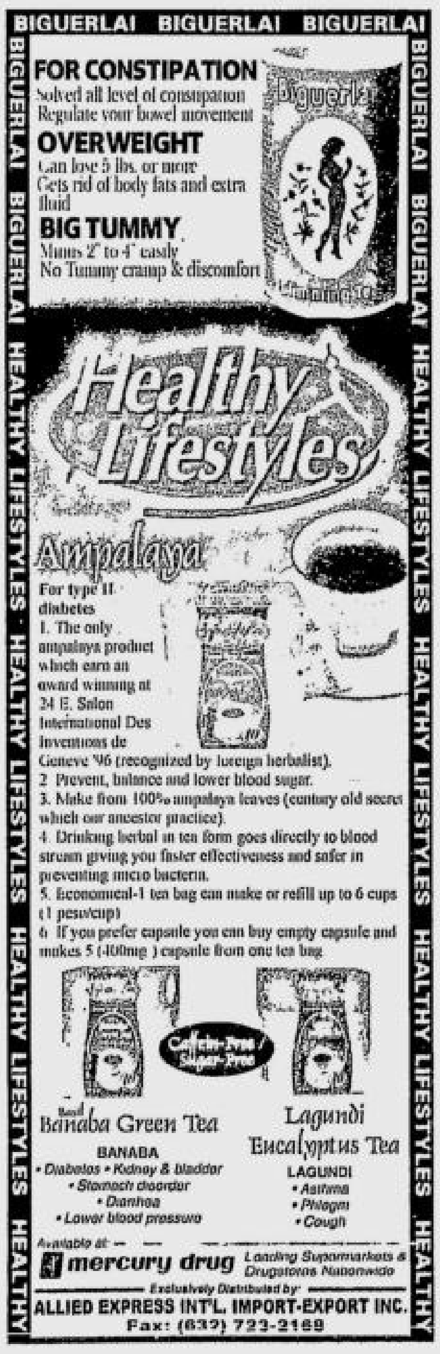
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Lacson, Revilla join CA; 6 new envoys OKd

SENATORS Panfilo Lacson and Ramon Revilla have been sworn in as new members of the powerful Commission on Appointments, which confirmed yesterday nine senior Armed Forces officers and six Department of Foreign Affairs officials as new ambassadors.

Lacson took over the seat left by Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas F. Ople while Revilla assumed the post previously occupied by the ailing Sen. Renato Cayetano. Also sworn in yesterday was Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat, who replaced Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo.

After the three new CA member took their oath, the CA proceeded to confirm six DFA officials.

They are Undersecretary Lauro Baja as permanent representative to the United Nations in New York; Noel Cabrera as ambassador to Romania, with concurrent jurisdiction over Bulgaria and Moldova; Jose Lino Guerrero Jr. as ambassador to Bangladesh with jurisdiction voer Sri Lanka and Maldives;

Eduardo Pablo Maglaya as ambassador to Bahrain; Antonio Rodriguez as ambassador to Thailand and permanent representative to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;and Bayani Mangibin as ambassador to Kuwait.

Also confirmed were major generals Cristolito Balaoing and Edilberto Adan, the AFP spokesperson; rear admiral Ernesto de Leon; brigadier generals Alphonsus Crucero, Eusebio Ramos and Claudio Estalilla; and commodores Anselmo Legaspi, Gilmer Batestil and Margarito Sanchez Jr.

Taking over former senator Ople's seat, Lacson will hold the vice chairmanship of the CA's Committee on Labor, Employment and Social Welfare and membership in 19 other committees.

Revilla, as assistant majority floorleader, will chair the CA Committee on Justice and Judicial and Bar Council, and sit as vice chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Committee on Rules and Regulations.

The CA has received an opposition filed by the B'laan and Maguindanao indigenous groups in General Santos City to the appointment of Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun.

Gozun became the third among the new Cabinet appointees to face opposition at the Commission on Appointments, after Justice Secretary Simen Datumanong and Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus.

Gozun's appointment, however, has not been submitted yet to the CA for confirmation.

Absentee vote, signed into law today, needs P1B

By Juliet L. Javellana

ONE billion pesos will be allocated this year for the preparations needed to implement the absentee voting law, according to Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada Jr., chair of the House foreign relations committee.

The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003 would be signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang this afternoon following its ratification by both chambers of Congress.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the President had promised to sign the measure into law within 24 hours of its passage by Congress and would do so at 1:30 p.m. today.

"More than seven million Filipino overseas workers are waiting for this law," De Venecia said.

The measure, which would allow qualified overseas Filipinos to vote in national elections starting in the 2004 elections, was ratified by the House on Tuesday night and by the Senate earlier.

Lozada said P1 billion would be provided this year through a supplemental budget. The budget for 2004, when it will be implemented for the first time, would be included in the proposed budget for next year.

Several congressmen on Tuesday night continued to question some provisions of the landmark measure, including that which allows Filipino emigrants to avail of the right to vote for president, vice president, senators and partylist representatives.

Lozada, who defended the measure on the floor, said that the gray areas of the law would be reviewed by the Congressional Oversight Committee after its initial implementation in 2004.

Congress placed the sunset provision because of lingering doubts about the absentee voting system.

Section 28 of the measure provides that "Congress shall complete a mandatory review of the law two years after the May 2004 elections for the purpose of amending it to expand or restrict its coverage, scope and application."

No more nosy press for Palace guests

By Dona Pazzibugan

MALACAÑANG has made it easier for its guests to sneak past nosy reporters.

The Presidential Security Group has come up with a new set-up where Palace employees and guests will now pass through Gate 4, which directly leads to the Palace and the Premier Guest House.

Until yesterday, all guests to Malacañang pass through Gate 6, which leads to Kalayaan Hall.

The press working area is at the ground floor of Kalayaan Hall.

Under the previous set-up, visitors have to disembark upon entering Gate 6 and go through X-ray inspection at the Kalayaan sentry gate which leads to the Palace.

From the lobby of Kalayaan Hall, vigilant reporters can easily see who's coming in and out of Malacañang.

Reporters used to do their "ambush" interviews just as officials enter or exit through the Kalayaan sentry gate.

The PSG did away with all that by putting up a sentry gate at Gate 4, which was previously closed at all times.

The PSG cited "security procedures" when it informed the Malacañang press corps of the changes.

Since December, the PSG required reporters as well as officials and employees of the Office of the Press Secretary and Appointments Office which hold office at the Kalayaan Hall to go through X-ray inspection at the Kalayaan sentry gate.

Before that, only those who would actually go to the Palace were required to submit to X-ray inspection.

The PSG then cited the need for stricter security inside the Palace.

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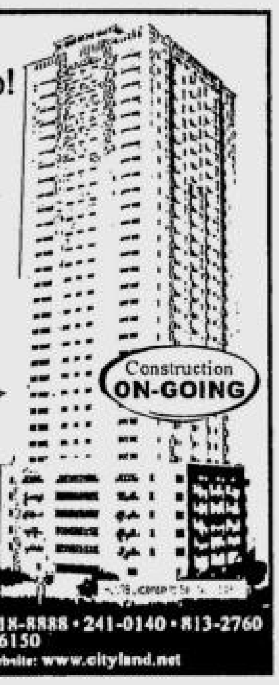

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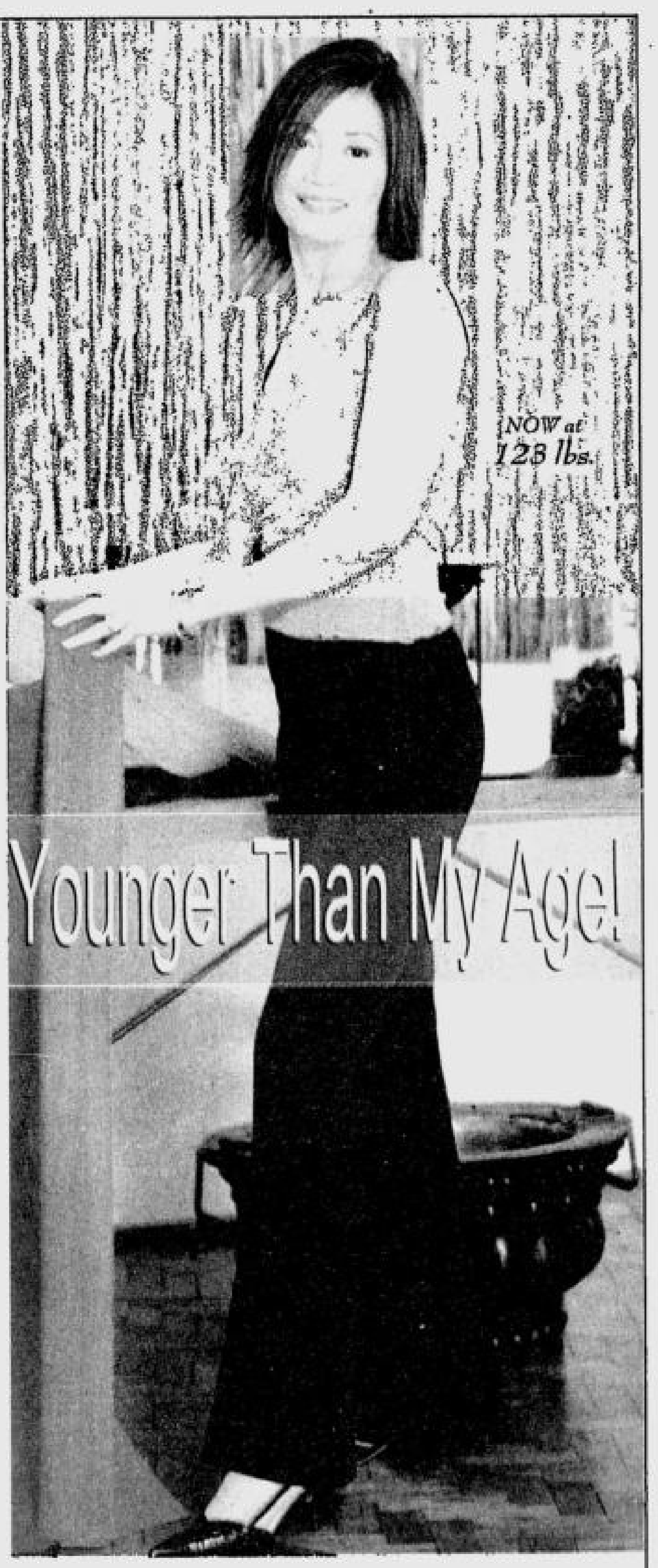
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Senators reject bank waivers on secrecy

From page A1

pension on Tuesday of the meeting of the bicameral conference committee, which is working to reconcile the amendments to the Amla that the House and Senate had approved separately on Monday. The bicameral committee was scheduled to reconvene as a whole at 7 p.m. last night.

Congress has until Friday to give more teeth to Amla to avoid financial sanctions from developed countries. The original deadline set by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, an international money laundering watchdog, was Feb. 12.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the government would ask the FATF to extend the deadline because it "can be stretched technically up to Friday."

"We have plenty of time," Sen. Edgardo Angara said.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said he could ask the FATF to extend the deadline but could not assure senators that the task force would agree to the request.

At the question hour in the Senate, Buenaventura said a law containing three provisions that comply with FATF standards-setting the threshold on suspect transactions at P500,000, allowing regulators to look into suspicious accounts without a court order, and making the amended Amla retroactive—must be passed before the watchdog concluded its three-day plenary meetings on Feb. 14.

Buenaventura was summoned to the Senate yesterday to explain the internal training manual prepared by the United Coconut Planters' Bank for its frontline staff to closely monitor suspicious accounts. He said neither the Bangko Sentral nor the Anti-Money Laundering Council had anything to do with the manual.

An official of the Bankers' Association of the Philippines (BAP) said any provision barring a waiver would not sit well with the FATF as it would make the Amla less restrictive.

"We should recall the impeachment trial which made it harder for the prosecution (to look into the bank deposits of then President Joseph Estrada) because there was no waiver sought by the bank involved," Leonilo Coronel, BAP executive director, said.

Coronel was referring to the bank deposits of Jose Velarde, an alias allegedly used by Estrada, in Equitable PCI Bank.

US requirement

He said Citibank was bound by a US law requiring it to seek a waiver of the right to the secrecy of the bank deposits of public officials and their relatives.

Angara said rejecting deposits unless the depositor signed a waiver of his or her right to secrecy "is against public policy."

He said "keeping bank and financial data is a matter of public policy and not a matter that you can bargain or negotiate away."

He said he would push for the insertion of a provision in the Amla that would make it unlawful for banks to require depositors to sign a waiver of their rights to the confidentiality of their transactions.

Angara made the proposal in reaction to the UCPB watchlist of depositors. He said the guidelines for making the watchlist could have been prepared by people in the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

"This can be used against public officials, whether from the opposition or administration," Angara said.

Either Malacañang or the intelligence community could have prepared the UCPB watchlist, according to Sen. Joker Arroyo.

Wide gap

Angara acknowledged that there was a "wide gap" between the Senate and House versions, but expressed optimism that the differences will be reconciled.

"We will work hard, pick each other's brains and seek out alternatives," Angara said.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the Senate panel in the bicameral committee, earlier said a compromise threshold amount of P750,000 might be acceptable to both sides. The House has set the threshold at P500,000, while the Senate has set it at P2 million.

TAKING time out for laughter are Senators Joker Arroyo and Nene Pimentel during the heated committee hearing on the amendments to the money laundering law at the Senate on Wednesday. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura is summoned to the Senate to explain the monitoring of allegedly suspicious accounts.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

The Senate requires investigators to get a court order before they can look into suspect bank accounts. The House has done away with court orders.

Buenaventura said the Philippines would be penalized if it did not adopt the standards set by FATF.

"What the sanctions are and how grave they could be, I cannot say," he said. But if sanctions are imposed, the hardest to be hit will be the country's 8 million overseas workers and their $7 billion to $8 billion in annual remittances.

He said Western Union, a remittance company, had already been slapped with a penalty of about P400 million by a foreign correspondent bank for lack of documentation.

"The FATF is not trying to dictate. If we decide to drive on the left side of the road, that is our option. But if we deal with them we have to conform with their standards. If we are penalized, we may be forced to go manual and the cost would go to $30 to $35 per transaction from let us say, $2 right now," Buenaventura said.

He said regardless of the amount, all Philippine transactions would be subjected to undue scrutiny and this would jack up the fees. Remittances that are processed in a day could take days and even weeks if the FATF starts imposing sanctions, Buenaventura added. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Step aside Marikina, Cebu's bulldog here

From page A1

"It's the pride of the Cebuanos, as well as other Filipinos, to produce the biggest pair of shoes manually by local manufacturers," said Algencio Sandoy, a member of the Carcar United Footwear Manufacturer Association Inc. (Cufmai).

He said his group, one of several associations of shoe manufacturers in the town, intended to complete the pair before the end of the year. Actually, Cufmai has to make only one more giant shoe to pair off with what it produced last year.

The "bulldog" shoe is taupe brown in color and measures 7.6 meters long, 2.9 meters wide, and 4.2 meters high. It is made of leather imported from Thailand. Its shoelace, a local cord thread, measures 24 meters, and braided into eight steel eyelets.

This is bigger than Marikina's pair of shoes, which are 5.5 meters long and 2.25 meters wide and 1.83 meters high.

Festival display

Carcar's mammoth shoe was displayed during the town's Kabkaban (derived from Carcar's prehispanic name) Festival on Nov. 24 last year. It was also presented during the Sinulog Mardi Gras on Jan. 19 in this city.

Carcar, which is known for its *chicharon* (crackling pork skin), *ampao* (a rice delicacy) and ancestral houses, is a local counterpart of Marikina. It is home to a thriving shoe industry, which has existed even before the Second World War, said Demateo Canape, Cufmai treasurer.

The town now has 465 manufacturers of leather goods, which have almost 300 skilled workers. Aside from shoes and sandals, they produce wallets, lighter holders, horse saddles, and even holsters.

Mercedita Apura, Cufmai president, said her group, composed of 17 shoe manufacturers, did not originally plan to surpass Marikina's feat listed in the Guinness Book.

Apura recalled that when her group met on Nov. 5 last year to discuss an invitation of the municipal government to join the Kabkaban Festival that coincided with the town fiesta, it was unanimously decided that a giant shoe would be produced as it would best represent the members.

Samuel Lauron, the layout artist, said he finished the design in just two days "only on a sheet of paper" and without the aid of a computer.

Popular design

Lauron said the bulldog design was adopted because it was one of the most popular and was widely used by workers.

The members also wanted to make a shoe that would best represent the "industrious and hardworking" Cebuanos.

"Almost everything was done by hand. We did not have sophisticated machines such as those in other places ... we didn't want to imitate the executive shoe [which] Marikina had manufactured," Lauron said.

The Cufmai spent more than P300,000 for the project. It imported 20 sheets of 40 square feet of leather from Thailand and utilized 80 gallons of rugby.

In 17 days, the group's 35 skilled workers completed the giant shoe.

Apura said they had to work hard to be able to finish the project in time for the festival despite their old and less sophisticated machines.

"It was not easy given the short notice but we wanted to join. We had to leave our homes to attend to and supervise the project. We woke up early and slept very late at night. It only took us days to finish the product that Cebuanos are now proud of," she stressed.

Perseverance paid off.

The giant shoe impressed not only the people who attended the festival but also the local officials.

Gov. Pablo Garcia then broached the idea that the unusual product participate in the Sinulog Mardi Gras in the city. True enough, the giant shoe on a float received warm applause from spectators as it was paraded on the streets.

Garcia urged the Cufmai to produce another shoe to make a pair so it can qualify for the Guinness. He promised to provide P1 million in financial support.

Apura said the Guinness staff had assured her group of an entry once the requirements, such as completing the pair and documentation, were met.

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FOR BOTTLE OF BRANDY

Pampanga judge fired for bribery

By Michael Lim Ubac

A PAMPANGA judge has lost his job and retirement benefits for receiving a bottle of Fundador brandy in 1997.

It was no ordinary bottle. It came with P5,000, and was given in exchange for help to broker the amicable settlement of a case pending with another court.

Apparently enraged over the "serious misconduct," the 15-member high bench unanimously ordered the immediate dismissal of Judge Rodrigo R. Flores, presiding judge of the San Fernando, Pampanga Municipal Trial Court Branch 2.

In a strongly-worded full court resolution dated Feb. 7, the Supreme Court found Flores guilty of bribery and of violating the Code of Judicial Conduct, and inhibited him from appealing the decision.

He was also barred from reemployment in any government branch or agency, including government-owned and -controlled corporations.

Influence-peddling or intercession in a case by a judge was "reprehensible," the SC stressed.

The decision stemmed from a complaint lodged by lawyer Maria Elissa F. Velez against Flores for incompetence, gross ignorance of the law and violation of the Anti-Graft Law.

Velez filed the administrative complaint on June 13, 2000 in connection with a case for ejectment. But although the circumstances surrounding the case already included an alleged attempt at extortion, it was not the one that cost Flores his career.

On an earlier occasion, Velez recounted in the complaint, Flores had asked her for P5,000 and a bottle of Fundador brandy in exchange for help in settling a collection case she was handling, then pending with another sala.

Flores vehemently denied everything. He told Pampanga Executive Judge Adelaida Ala-Medina, who first investigated the administrative case, that he was a diabetic and could not take hard drinks.

As evidence, Velez submitted a letter from Flores. In a subsequent resolution, Medina and the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) said the letter "did not conclusively prove that Flores demanded or received anything from Velez."

Nonetheless, Medina decided, it showed "that the judge was interceding on behalf of a litigant in a case pending before another judge."

Medina found Flores guilty of soliciting money from Velez and, with regards to the ejectment case, "of deliberately delaying the resolution to get the pay-off."

The OCA and the full court concurred with Medina's findings, saying "judicial indolence is considered gross negligence or inefficiency, and gross dereliction of duty."

Leave GMA alone, Palace tells pollsters

By Carlito Pablo

LEAVE her alone.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on political affairs yesterday asked survey firms to stop including his boss in public opinion polls on potential 2004 presidential candidates.

"She has removed herself from contention," Jose Ma. Rufino said. "Let it be."

A recent survey by the Left-leaning Ibon Foundation Inc. showed that if elections were held today, Ms Macapagal would end up a poor eighth.

The same survey indicated that about half of Metro Manila voters didn't believe the President's declaration that she would not seek reelection.

"(But) there's new reason to be excited again," said Rufino, who is also executive director of the ruling Lakas-CMD. He said the party's headquarters was "being deluged with calls, letters and fax messages" endorsing Sen. Juan Flavier as standard bearer.

Although Flavier consented to having his name included in the surveys only two weeks ago, Rufino said they were now seeing "a phenomenal response from various sectors, and practically from all over the country."

Several groups have started launching movements to draft Flavier, he added, initiatives not seen so far for other presidential timbers in Lakas.

He said Lakas would hold its selection process toward the end of the year. "But if this Flavier trend continues, we might say we've found a new champion."

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Court denies bid to drop coco levy case

GOVERNMENT efforts to recover the controversial coconut levy funds collected during the Marcos dictatorship has managed to get through a long-standing legal bottleneck at the Sandiganbayan.

The anti-graft court on Monday denied for lack of merit separate motions by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and former senator Juan Ponce Enrile which sought the dismissal of a 1987 ill-gotten wealth case involving the coco funds.

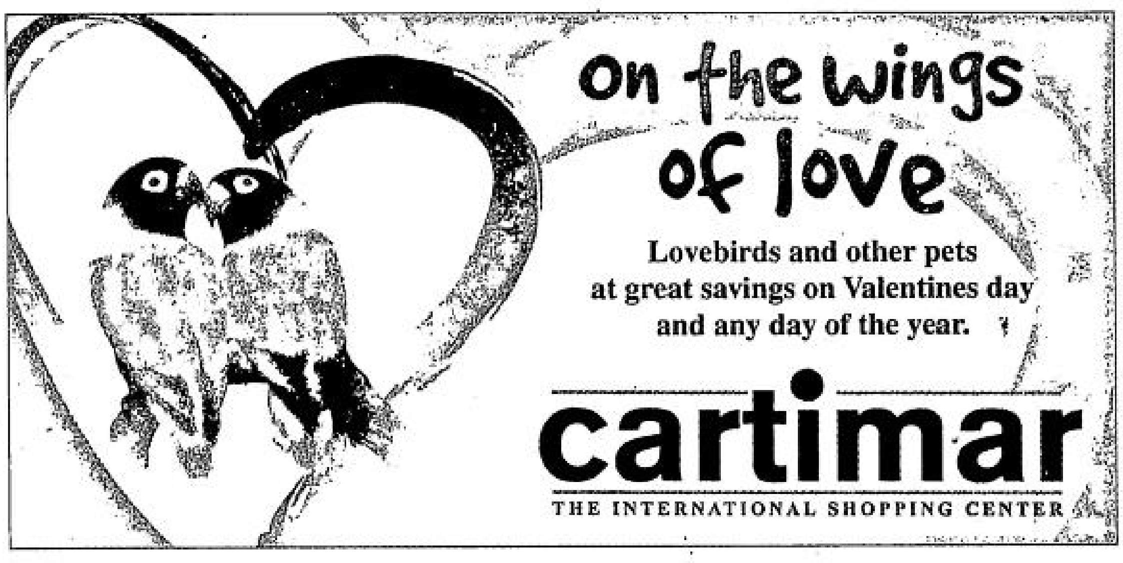
The case involves government's claim over coco levy funds invested in the First United Bank, which later became the United Coconut Planters Bank.

The anti-graft court's First Division dismissed the contention of Cojuangco and Enrile that the complaint stated no cause of action and that the court had no jurisdiction over the case.

The court also declared that the right of the State to recover alleged ill-gotten wealth did not expire with the passage of time, contrary to the defendants' argument that the complaint was filed beyond the prescriptive period.

It ruled that the case "should instead undergo trial for the reception of evidence to resolve ultimately the issue of ownership of the subject UCPB shares."

In a 15-page resolution, the Sandiganbayan further cited the Dec. 14, 2001 Supreme Court ruling stating that coconut levy funds then administered by Cojuangco during the Marcos regime "are prima facie public funds."



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Doctor raises warning vs cold, cough medicines

By Armand N. Nocum

AN OFFICIAL of the Philippine Society of Hypertension Inc. (PSH) yesterday admitted that there are dangers in the use of cough or cold medicines containing phenylpropanolamine or PPA, which was declared unsafe for use by the US Food and Drug Administration.

In an interview during the PSH convention at Edsa-Shangrila Hotel, Dr. Abdias V. Aquino, a member of the PSH board of trustees, said there is a need for the Bureau of Food and Drugs to review its policy declaring the PPA safe.

He also said that given the dangers of PPA to people with hypertension, local health organizations should do a comprehensive study on the matter.

"What is important is that patients must be aware of the complications that could arise, especially if the patient is hypertensive," he said. He added there seems to be a "dose-related effect" of PPA to patients with heart problems.

Researches at Yale University have published a study showing that the intake of high dosage of PPA can lead to hemorrhagic stroke, or bleeding in the brain.

"It's something that they should think about. Discuss this with people in the field, the experts around," he said when asked whether BFAD should reconsider its advisory declaring PPA safe.

But he said he had not encountered anyone having had a stroke after taking medicines with PPA.

He admitted that in treating patients with hypertension, doctors should be cautious in prescribing PPA-laden medicines.

"If the patient is really hypertensive, then he should shy away from drugs containing PPA," he said.

But he said patients with no history of hypertension need not worry about the disease.

Following the release of the Yale study in 2001, various countries, including Brazil, Canada, China, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Middle East, Thailand, have either banned, replaced, or stopped the sale of medicines with PPA.

Others have withdrawn the licenses or stopped the importation of medicines with PPA.

But the local BFAD preferred to simply regulate the sale of medicines with PPA, ruling that only those medicines with 25 mg. or below can be sold over the counter.

Yesterday, an official of the Philippine Heart Association also declared PPA safe.

PHA President Annette Pizarro-Borromeo said medicines with PPA are safe so long as people use it in the right dosage.

"There is no basis to say that PPA is unsafe for therapeutic consumption as long as the right dosage is used," she said.

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Who is isolated?

EDITORIAL

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN alliance has stepped up the tempo of its war preparation with warnings that the United States and Great Britain face the threat of attack this week by al-Qaida terrorists. The Central Intelligence Agency said that the most specific intelligence reports to date suggest an attack on US interests at home or on the Arabian peninsula even amid the three-day Haj.

In perfect synchronization with Washington, the British government authorized the deployment of troop reinforcements to build up security at Heathrow airport in response to a "specific threat."

"Specific threat" finds local resonance in the vocabulary of anti-terrorist measures. Only a couple of months ago, Australia and Canada shut their embassies for several weeks because of unidentified but "specific threat" of terrorist attack.

Coincidentally, the US-UK warnings were issued following the Feb. 5 presentation by Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations Security Council, which sought to establish a link between al-Qaida and Iraq. It also followed the intensification of the diplomatic row between the United States and its allies, on the one hand, and France, Germany and Russia, backed by China, on the other, over the issue of increasing the number of UN arms inspectors in Iraq and giving them more time.

France, backed by Germany, Russia and China, has circulated in the council proposals to enlarge the team, in an effort to exhaust all possible alternatives to war. Such a resolution would stall the momentum of US war preparations. The United States and Britain have also drafted a resolution authorizing the use of force. These two resolutions are headed for a collision that will reveal in full the rift that has sundered the transatlantic alliance over Iraq.

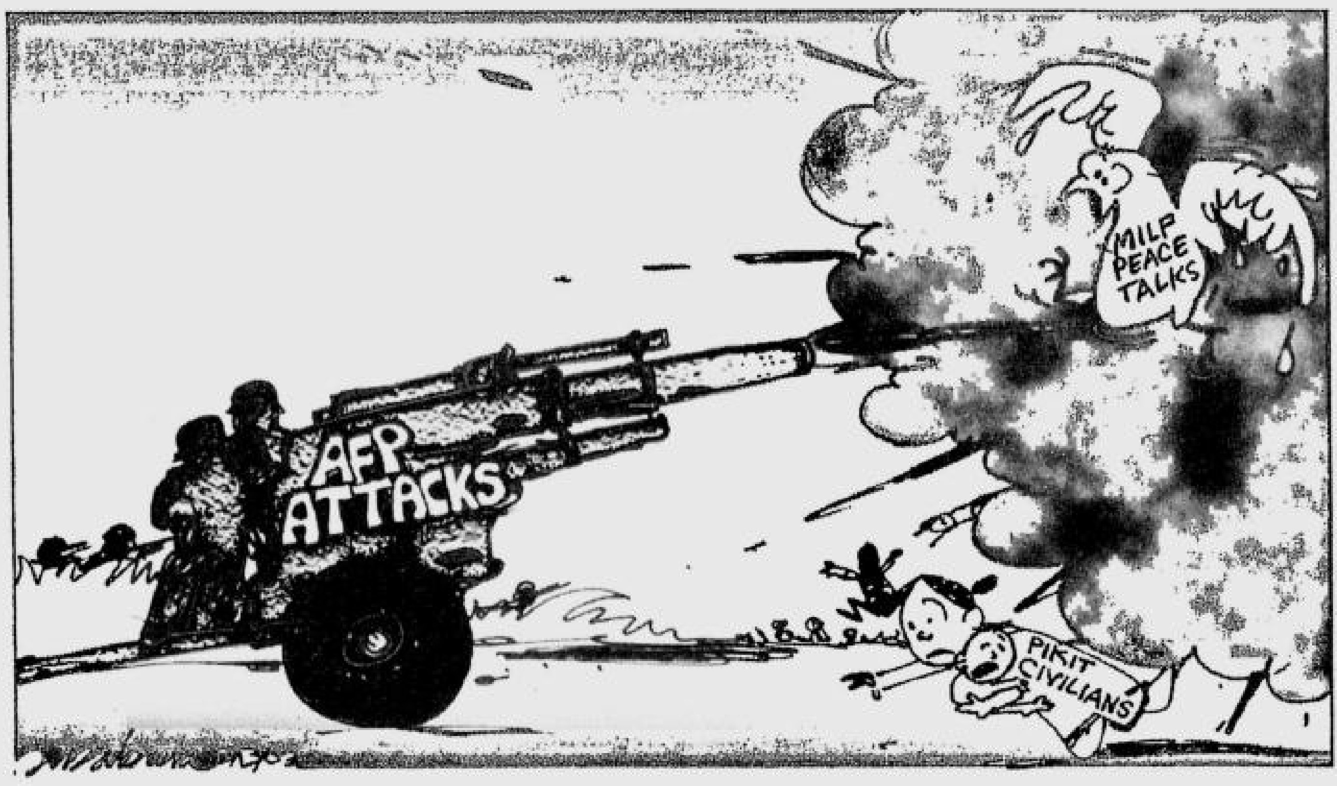
The cleavage was further deepened and magnified when the 19-nation Nato was rocked by the refusal of France, Belgium and Germany to allow Nato military planners to make preparations for defending Turkey in case of an attack from Iraq. The refusal prompted US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to say that the United States would make plans to assist Turkey "outside of Nato," if the three countries persisted with their veto. The Nato deadlock has been described as one of the worst crises in the alliance's 53-year history.

US President George W. Bush expressed disappointment over the veto and said he could not understand the decision, although it had been made clear by the three dissenting countries that they agreed with the principle of assisting Turkey, but they did not want to prejudice efforts to resolve the impasse over Iraq through diplomatic means. This position of exhausting all diplomatic options before going to war springs from the statement of French President Jacques Chirac saying, "War is always an admission of failure."

Charges are flying across the Atlantic that France and Germany are being isolated by the counter-alliance being formed by the United States with smaller southern European states and central European states seeking entry into the European Union. Rumsfeld calls this "new Europe," but if we examine the geopolitical weights of these two contending alliances, it can readily be seen that weight is decisively on the side of France and Germany, which are backed by Russia and China in stalling the rush to war. Only the most politically naïve can claim that the newfound US allies are equal in power, whether military, political or economic, to the French-German-plus-Russia entente.

At the UN Security Council, it is even more clear that it is the United States and Britain which are being isolated by three veto-wielding council members: France, Russia and China. In this configuration, one can see that the United States cannot have the 15-0 vote on Council Resolution 1441, which would authorize intrusive UN inspection of Iraqi facilities and programs for the production of weapons of mass destruction.

UN inspectors led by Hans Blix and Mohamed Al-Baradei have returned to Iraq after Baghdad agreed to overflight of spy planes and interviews with scientists without "minders." Blix considers these moves as a sign of cooperation on process but he wants more cooperation on substance. Blix and Al-Baradei are to report to the Security Council on Friday in what is regarded as a make-or-break stage of the inspection option. Then we will know if the United States and its "alliance of the willing" will decide to go to war, without the legitimacy conferred by a new UN resolution.



Bureaucrat blocking feeding program for kids

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

HERE is one more reason things never get done in the Philippines: A non-government organization (NGO) under the United States Department of Agriculture wants to feed thousands of malnourished schoolchildren in the Philippines with free milk. Everything is free. The milk is donated by the American dairy industry, with no strings attached. The Philippine government doesn't have to spend a single centavo.

The Department of Education is enthusiastic over the feeding program. Officials in Bicol, where the program will begin, are raring to go. Preparations and negotiations started way back in September 2002, but until now the program can't be implemented. The reason? One bureaucrat of the local National Dairy Authority (NDA) wants the NGO to buy the milk from the NDA.

But the NDA doesn't even have the milk. The feeding program requires at least 25,000 liters of milk a day. The NDA can produce only a fraction of that, and it is not even pasteurized. The NDA offered to supply the milk raw, straight from the farmers. Feeding children with unpasteurized milk is worse than not feeding them at all. You never know what bacteria is in the milk that can make the children sick. The NGO plans to feed 320,000 children daily for at least three years.

All government agencies associated with the project—the DepEd, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, etc.—have already approved the feeding program. But this bureaucrat from the NDA wrote to all of them to block the program.

The NDA doesn't have the milk. And anyway, the NGO doesn't have any cash with which to buy any milk. The milk is being donated free by American dairy cooperatives. The NGO is paying the factory processing the milk and putting them in tetrapacks not with cash but with milk. The first batch of the milk, thousands and thousands of tetrapacks, are now in bodegas awaiting distribution to hungry children. But this one bureaucrat has succeeded in delaying the program for reasons only she knows.

The milk processing plant in Cavite has temporarily stopped processing and packing the milk. They might just rot in the warehouses. The NGO plans to lease another processing plant in Mindanao. But red tape, which President Macapagal-Arroyo, by the way, promised to cut, is still very long in the Philippines.

The USDA has similar programs in Indonesia, feeding 450,000 schoolchildren; in Vietnam, 320,000 children; and in Bangladesh, 210,000 children. It started the same program in Pakistan only last year. It has never encountered the red tape and obstructions that it is encountering in the Philippines.

The NGO has the funding for the program's first year here. This is the time to seek funding for the second and third years. But with the United States spending billions of dollars deploying its armed forces for the impending war in Iraq, funds for aid to Third World countries will naturally become scarce. If war actually breaks out, the United States will need more funds to rehabilitate Iraq, and still more to replenish its stock of armaments and military supplies.

What I'm driving at is that if the Philippine feeding program doesn't get going soon, the United States may just cut off funding for the program. Here in the urban areas, the effects of malnutrition on children may not be so alarming. But there in the countryside, it is. With children eating mostly tubers, which contain only starch and no protein, they don't grow. Some of them don't even have the strength to walk. Worse, their brains don't develop, and they grow up to become like bureaucrats in the NDA.

Here is deliverance for the impoverished children in the form of milk to be fed to them for free. But Some Filipino bureaucrats want to throw that chance away.

* * *

They built a "Police Community Center" under the flyover at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City. There are always policemen sitting inside the center. A police patrol car is usually parked on the street outside. At any given time, two or three of them are seated on plastic chairs outside, passing the time away. Yet only a few steps away, across the street, directly in their line of sight, traffic is chaotic. Jeepneys and buses block the intersection to load and unload passengers. Vehicles wanting to exit Tandang Sora and turn right on Commonwealth can't move and traffic stretches back for a kilometer or more.

There is a sign on the corner that says, "No Loading and Unloading." Another sign in Filipino tells commuters, "Doon Po and Sakayan at Babaan," with an arrow pointing to the newly built waiting shed. But does anybody go to the waiting shed? Nobody. Commuters continue to wait for their ride at the corners, unmindful of the signs, and jeepneys and buses continue to load and unload there, blocking the intersection.

But does any policeman in the nearby Police Community Center bother to walk the few meters to tell the commuters to go to the waiting shed only a few steps away? And does any of them bother to arrest or even warn the drivers who violate the "No Loading/Unloading" sign? Of course not. They behave as though they don't see anything.

If these policemen can't do their duties, what are they there for? Why was the center constructed with the people's money in the first place? Why were the waiting sheds on both sides of Commonwealth built at all if nobody was going to use them? Why are we paying these policemen their salaries and allowances at all?

Postscript to chastity

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I SAW a friend of mine some days ago. She was putting up a counseling center in the province, the only one of its kind there. She was a little worried about not being able to attend to it closely since she had a practice in Manila and could only go to the province rarely. But since the center was meant to train future counselors rather than minister directly to clients, she was hopeful it might work. In any case, she thought the need for it was patent. There were so few psychologists in this country, and there were so many in dire need of their services.

I joked that where she was, she probably would not lack for clients if she had to take them in to keep the center afloat. The place teemed with priests and nuns. The center, to begin with, was suggested by a priest, the head of a university. More than anybody else, I suggested, they seemed badly in need of a psychologist. They alone could keep her center busy. My friend laughed heartily, as psychologists do.

The other week though, completely serendipitously, I saw something in the papers that made me wonder if my joke was really a joke. That was our item on Antipolo Bishop Crisostomo Yalung, who seemed to have gotten into big trouble with the Catholic hierarchy for fathering a child. Yalung himself has not admitted it, he has only begged his parishioners' forgiveness for having committed certain "errors" and "mistakes." His uncle, Ricardo Yalung, is greatly distraught and refuses to believe it. "I cannot believe this," he says, "because my nephew has never done any foolishness." And until he hears the confession from his nephew's very lips, he was never going to believe it.

The Church of course has been rocked by the scandal. And if our report is to be believed, it has gagged the clergy from talking about it in public.

I don't know that psychologists, or even psychiatrists, are the answer to this. I remember once talking to a group of medical practitioners during Mental Health Week, a truly bizarre pass (I told them they were taking a huge risk presuming I was qualified to preach on the virtues of sanity), and saying that it was all very well for psychologists to try to make people adjust to the normal. But what, I said, (I got this from Erich Fromm) if the normal itself was suspect? What if we were merely trying to make the deviant adapt to a norm or standard that was itself arguably irrational?

This is an example of it. The only reason a Catholic bishop's dalliance with a woman and paternity of her child can be an error or mistake, or assail the world with its apparent putrescence, is that we hold that a minister of God may not do so. The problem is not necessarily solved by us reaffirming the law. We could always question its wisdom.

I have, repeatedly. My heart goes out to Bishop Yalung, assuming of course the rumors are true. I don't know why anyone should be proscribed from loving another person, of the opposite or the same sex. Though I also don't know why that should naturally lead to producing a child (blame that on the Church's scorn for contraceptives). Frankly, I cannot understand the concept of enforced chastity. It's inhuman, and does a lot of harm.

At the very least, I can't see how it can stand the test of time, or temptation. The best way to meet temptation, as Oscar Wilde said, not altogether facetiously, is to yield to it. I remember again in this respect what someone told me some years ago: Catanduanes used to be the country's No. 1 supplier of seminarians. This stopped suddenly in the mid-1990s, the numbers shrinking from a flood to a trickle. After careful investigation, a panel pinpointed the source of the scourge. It was the introduction of cable TV.

That must suggest that the willingness to accept the deprivation can come only under the most, well, let us just say, controlled circumstances. Which is not what real life is. It is uncontrollable.

Quite apart from this, even if it could be done, it's the sort of thing that guarantees people developing all sorts of complexes. As a priest once told me, the problem there is that to keep the temptation at bay, you don't even take the first step to get close to a person you could get attracted to. The result, he said, is that your knowledge of people, or women in particular, becomes terribly superficial. My friend resolved this problem by removing the barriers and taking the plunge to knowing people better—in the non-Biblical sense of the word. He has remained a priest. I don't know if he has remained celibate—that is his goddamn business. But I blaspheme.

Which brings me to why I can't understand why the vow of celibacy for priests isn't scrapped altogether. It's completely manmade, Jesus never preached it. Of course, as a personal choice, fine, though I should think the more humane choice would be to just remain single, not celibate. But that is probably too radical for the Church.

But look at it this way: Priests, unlike vestal virgins, are not just there for decoration, or ritualistic value. They are there to help others in this imperfect world. I can't imagine how anyone can presume to advise couples on how they may love each other, or at least keep together, who has no idea of the joys and travails of being together. Or worse, raising children. I can't imagine how anyone can reach out to touch others' (and not just an abstract flock's) hearts and give them solace in their grief whose heart is taught to spurn worldly love. Deprivation, denial and abnegation cannot be the fountainhead of wisdom, it can only be the source of bitterness and cynicism.

Certainly, it can't be a good guide for knowing the difference between "Live Show" and "Patikim ng Pinya."

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Senate hounded by '11' again

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS this column was being written yesterday afternoon, it was unclear if the bicameral conference committee was able to reconcile the two versions of the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA). The two panels were closeted in one of the rooms of the PICC since 11 a.m. and neither Senate President Franklin Drilon nor Speaker Jose de Venecia could predict what would happen. Both were standing by ready to rush to the PICC if necessary, still hopeful that the deadline for the passage of the amendments could be met. At about the same time, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the high-powered group formed by the world's richest and most economically powerful nations, was meeting halfway around the world, in Paris, to see which countries would be sanctioned for failing to comply with its conditions. Because of the delay in the AMLA's passage the Philippines was considered a candidate for blacklisting, and the FATF deadline of Feb. 12 was approaching quickly.

* * *

Warnings have been raised not only by the chiefs of the two chambers of Congress but also by media, the business community and overseas Filipinos about the dire consequences of our failure to meet the FATF conditions. For the 7 million overseas Filipino workers, it means that their $8 billion annual remittances, which help some 30 million Filipinos back home and prop up the economy, could suffer delays while they are closely scrutinized in international bank headquarters. As a result, processing fees are bound to go. For Pinoy importers,on the other hand, it could mean delays in the processing of their letters of credit.

* * *

Critics have noted the lack of urgency of Congress in addressing this issue, which has been raised by the FATF since last year. The delay in AMLA's passage was caused principally by 11 senators who wanted a P2-million deposit threshold for amounts subject to scrutiny and their insistence that a court order be obtained before an account could be investigated by the Anti-Money Laundering Council. The Senate vote on these issues was a very close 11-10 in favor, with Drilon voting against it. The Senate seems to be repeatedly hounded by that number.

* * *

In fairness to the House, it passed the AMLA last Tuesday afternoon with the FATF threshold of $10,000 or its equivalent of P500,000 and scrapped altogether the requirement of a court order. I teased De Venecia that the House seemed to be very compliant, but he said, "We have no choice. The consequences of a lockout by FATF are very serious." I queried JDV why the $10,000 threshold and he said various countries, including France, Germany and Russia, have accepted it as the international standard, except Thailand which pegged it at the equivalent of P2.5 million. The Thai threshold prompted Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, one of the stubborn 11, to decry FATF's discrimination.

* * *

What delayed the passage of the AMLA was a crisis last Tuesday evening over a so-called "watchlist" of depositors who were allegedly being "watched" on suspicion of money laundering. Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat exposed the watchlist at the bicameral deliberations and the impression the senators got was that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas put that list together. Alarmed at what Sen. Vicente Sotto termed a "witch-hunt," they walked out, unfortunately taking away perhaps 24 hours of crucial action on the AMLA.

* * *

Ironically, this watchlist is not new. It first hit the newspapers last Oct. 24, 2002, without creating a stir. Some insiders believed Lobregat timed his "exposé" to derail the proceedings and decried his move as malicious and downright irresponsible. After the walkout, Drilon convened the Senate as a committee of the whole to hear Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura shed light on that watchlist. Buenaventura denied that the Bangko Sentral had anything to do with it. Further investigation showed that the watchlist was part of the United Coconut Planters Bank's training manual for bank people, put together by an over-enthusiastic junior official.

As this is being written, we don't know what will happen to the AMLA. Drilon says, "Those of us in the bloc of 10 did our best to convince our 11 colleagues." JDV observed that the inaction of the Senate is perhaps the best argument for a unicameral assembly.

* * *

Last month, Palawan Rep. Abraham Kahlil Mitra wrote Commissioner Eduardo Malinis of the Insurance Commission to ask him to look into the claim of his mother, Cecilia Blanco-Mitra, widow of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, against Blue Cross Insurance Corp. It is high time Malinis aired his views on this subject. Ms Mitra said Blue Cross Insurance refused to reimburse her claim for payment of a knee surgery done in the US, despite the fact that her policy was fully in force at that time and Blue Cross had assured her that it would meet its obligations. Ms Mitra had paid more than the regular premium in order that the "permanent exclusions" would be waived in her favor. But after the operation, Blue Cross invoked the usual excuse: her sickness was a "pre-existing condition."

Representative Mitra told Malinis that he is considering remedial legislation on this matter, noting the many individuals, including some prominent personalities, who appear to have been placed in the same predicament. This issue first came to light when I wrote about a similar claim of my sister-in-law, Neomi Tanedo-Olivares. Said Representative Mitra: "To my mind, Blue Cross Insurance, which represents itself as the prime insurer against sickness, can simply deny any and all illnesses as exclusion or as a pre-existing condition. Blue Cross, therefore, is not doing insurance business and its license should be revoked."

'Tita Midz' on the family

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I WASN'T able to make it to last Sunday's "Wild Meeting of Excluded Families" at the UP Lagoon, but I heard everyone who went had a blast!

The INQUIRER story on the gathering of men, women and children in "non-traditional" living arrangements said some 150 people attended, but Junice Melgar of Likhaan, which organized the gathering, said the number was closer to 500 (470 formally registered). The 150 or so our reporter saw were only the ones left to listen to the talk of Armida Siguion-Reyna who arrived after the program drew to a close, since she and daughter-in-law Bibeth Orteza lost their way in the maze of UP Diliman's weekend detours.

Junice says most of those who showed up were live-in couples, single parents and "second" (and counting) families from Likhaan's pilot communities in Pasay, Malabon and Bulacan. Statistics show that such "non-traditional families" are more common than we suppose, but they are rendered "invisible," and thus voiceless and powerless, by the Talibans of national morality.

I know we already carried a news report on "Tita Midz's" address, but I thought it was too funny and gutsy to be contained in a few quotes. So here's the full version (edited only for length). Read it and weep, laugh, gasp and shout hurray, as I felt on occasion while reading the full text.

* * *

I AM happy and proud to be here with you in this gathering you call the "First Wild Meeting of Excluded Families..."

Kayong mga narito ay hindi pinahintulutang mapasali sa katatapos na World Meeting of Families dahil sa diumano'y kawalan ninyo ng sapat na "Christian" values. At kung ako pala ay bata pa, hindi rin makukumbida ang aming pamilya sa ganoong uri ng World Meeting dahil ang ama at ina ko ay hindi agad nakasal, na para bang kasalanan ko, bilang bata, kung bakit nagkagayon.

Ang akala ng mga hindi gaanong nakakakilala sa akin ay kontrobersyal lang ako at kontra-pelo dahil iyon ang paraan ko para sumikat, o para mapag-usapan. The truth is, I've always been different, because I have since childhood known what it's like to be different and what it's like to be "outside the kulambo" according to the rules of society.

Isinilang akong bastarda.

Hindi lang ako, kundi pati na rin ang mga kapatid kong sina Lita, Irma, Chito, at Armando. Although by then a separated man, our father Alfonso Ponce-Enrile was still legally married to another woman when he met and fell in love with our mother Purita Liwanag. They were married only after a Divorce Law took effect during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines, and by then, all of us had been born.

* * *

BORN a bastard, early on I knew what it was like not to belong. Sa iskwelahan, ako iyung nakatanghod sa mga kaklaseng may suot na Virgin Mary Medal na may blue ribbon, mga kaiskwelang kasapi ng mga religious organizations kung saan tanging "legitimate children" lang ang tinatanggap. Nakipagsabunutan ako noong singhalan ng isang kaiskwela ng "Bastarda!"

Subalit kahit di agad nakasal ang mga magulang, pinalaki nila kaming tama at maayos. Moreover, my mother loved and cared for my father's children from other women, including one named Juanito Furaganan who just showed up on our doorstep after liberation, and who later on took the name Juan Ponce Enrile.

Ang magmahal at kumalinga sa mga anak na hindi atin ay di-birong gawain, pero napangatawanan iyon ng aking ina dahil sa siya ay isang Kristiyano...

Lumaki ako sa isang tahanang hindi sumusukat sa pagkatao ayon sa sexual orientation o sexual preference. My mother, a voice teacher and later on producer of operas, had gay friends whom she loved and nurtured and who, in turn, loved and nurtured her. The respect she gave her gay friends got into me, and just as well, dahil sa entertainment industry kung saan ako kabilang ay napakaraming maningning na talento na mga nagkataong bakla.

* * *

I KNOW that the Bible is clear with its passages that say this or that is sin. Gayunpaman, hindi para sa akin ang manghusga. Hindi ako Diyos; I have no right to impose on fellow men my personal sense of right and wrong. There are man-made rules of law to deal with those who break civility and order, but as far as God's law is concerned, we have free will...If conscience is the yardstick, there is greater cause to wonder about the morality and consequent steps undertaken by the Catholic Church.

The Church says "the family is under attack," and yet who has been so recently and so gravely exposed as perniciously attacking the family with past and continuing sexual abuse of minors and innocents?

The Church says "the family is under attack," but just who is truly killing the family by virtue of under-the-table maneuvers against the passage into law of the Reproductive Health Care Act, or House Bill 4110, especially in the face of a bankrupt national economy in a country as overly populated as ours?

The Church says "the family is under attack," but who has cruelly attacked the family through the rejection of all who are gathered here this afternoon?

I am no longer a Catholic. I ceased to be one the day it dawned upon me that the God the Catholic Church had made in its image was cruel, bigoted and narrow-minded.

But yes, I am a Christian. Alam ko kung sino ang magpapapasok sa akin sa langit, at hindi Siya pari, hindi rin simbahan. I have a personal relationship with a loving and living God through His son Jesus Christ who would not stop until all the sheep in his flock had been accounted for.

Mahal ni HesuKristo ang lahat ng tupa. Kayo iyon, at ako.

Culion, Culion

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

AN ISLAND now come to life. This place which used to be called the land of the living dead, a remote and lonely exile, a nowhere land from where few returned, a home for what were then called outcasts of society. Culion was a place to die slowly. That was how it was in the beginning, and for most of its 100 years as a so-called leper colony.

But for many Filipinos stricken with leprosy, this emerald dot in the middle of the ocean blue became a home and haven, a community to which they belonged. And for the brave and selfless medical workers and pastoral workers who broke ground, Culion was uncharted frontier that beckoned to only the brave—they who left all and responded to a special call.

Culion was, at one time, the world's largest leper colony, bigger in population than Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands where the saintly Father Damien The Leper spent his life. Culion was a laboratory both medical and social, where experts worked tirelessly to discover the elusive cure that would bring about healing for both body and soul.

Culion Island's existence as that special place will soon mark its 100th anniversary. As a tribute to the island and its people, both living and dead, a beautiful book will be launched next Thursday, Feb. 20 at 4 p.m. at the Manila Polo Club in Makati. Spanish Ambassador Iganacio Sagas is the guest of honor.

"Culion Island: A Leper Colony's 100-Year Journey Toward Healing" is a book like no other. Unabashedly I am advertising it. I was one of the writers. Published by Culion Foundation Inc. (culion@edsamail.com.ph. Tel. No. 8122170) and Fundacion Anesvad of Spain, "Culion Island" is a 200-page coffee-table book narrative and pictorial history of the island's transformation from the world's largest leper colony to its present status as a young municipality of Palawan. It traces the island's history starting from the pre-Spanish era, the establishment of the sanitarium in 1906 during the American occupation, the World War II years, until the present.

The chapters are presented in chronological order, the way historical accounts are usually written. But the book is more than just history. It is also a social, cultural and scientific treasure trove. And not to be forgotten are the special individuals who gave a face, a soul, a voice to the island. But this is getting ahead of the story.

The first chapter, "The Island," is about its topography and natural resources, its flora and fauna. "Provincia de Calamanianes" describes life on the island before and when the Spaniards came. "Island of Despair" covers 1904 to 1921, the colony's first years, while "The World's Largest Leper Colony" is about the growth of Culion's patient population and medical research. Then comes the "The War Years" visited by hunger and disorder.

I wrote Chapter 6, "Toward Healing," which covers the longest period (1946 to 1986). This was the era of desegregation, the withdrawal of privileges and the discovery of a cure in the latter part. "Into the World" naturally follows, with the number of patients becoming fewer and the younger generation actively finding their place in the island and away from it. It focuses on the social, political and economic and ecological challenges facing the island. The last chapter, "The Quest for a Cure," tells the story of how science and the efforts of dedicated people finally dealt a death blow to the dreaded disease.

The other writers are Ma. Cristina V. Rodriguez (editor), Yasmin Arquiza, Pennie A. de la Cruz, Apol Lejano, Clarissa V. Militante and Arturo C. Cunanan Jr., MD. Doris Lois Rifareal designed the book, Ed Santiago did the photos, Alex Umali the illustrations.

The book is also about individuals, the patients as well as those who ministered to them. Writing the main chapters was quite a job. It was the sidebars, the small stories about individual lives and the human side of things, that brought out the smiles and sniffles. Standing tall are the exceptional Dr. Lara who spent a lifetime among the patients, Father Olazabal, the Spanish Jesuit who looked after both the material and the spiritual needs of the patients, pioneering American Dr. Wade, the Barreyro family that chose to work on the island and settle there, the Saint Paul de Chartres nuns who looked after the babies and the students. The first batch of nuns were mostly French. One of them was the much-loved Mother Damien who very much wanted to die a leper. They arrived by slow boat in May 1906, two days ahead of the first boatload of patients. There are Simeon, Dolores, Hipolito, the Loredo couple who found love and healing.

When you get a chance to visit Culion, go visit the museum where you will find memorabilia: Culion currency, old photographs that show life in Culion in the early years, medical instruments. I was particularly attracted to the huge yellowing log books that contained the names of the first patients, where they came from, when they arrived. Many died within the year of their arrival. You'd notice how short their island stay was. Notice too the neat, copperplate-style penmanship that is now extinct.

A few months ago, I interviewed Magsaysay Award winner Dr. Ruth Pfau, the 70-ish German nun and doctor who worked among lepers for more than 40 years and set up a national leprosy control program in Pakistan. She never used the word Hansen's disease. She called the disease by its original name. I asked why, and she said that calling it by another name would be denying the tragedy, the pathos. I agree.

"Culion Island" is about the triumph of the spirit over pain and poverty. It is about hard work, and above all, faith and generosity.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Where are the flowers?

YOUNG BLOOD

Princess Pam

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

OH, no! It will be Valentine's Day again.

This will be my 29th Valentine's here on planet Earth and yet I haven't felt any excitement for this day. Would you believe that I haven't received anything for Valentine's Day except for a few flower-shaped chocolates that faded like wax from well-meaning friends who, by the way, didn't have "significant others" themselves? I don't know, but there is something missing from the whole exercise (the giving of chocolates).

You see, I also dream of receiving a bouquet of red roses. Well, tulips or carnation would be nice substitutes. Hmmm, OK, even a flower picked from his mother's flower pot or his neighbor's garden will do. A card with a few well-written sentences describing how he feels about me will really make my day.

And since it's a dream, and, as my mother says, "Dreams are free; so dream big time," I would really feel flattered if the flowers are from Holland Tulips or Petals and Twigs. Some people say the price doesn't really matter, but honestly it does matter to me.

What is it about Feb. 14 to get so excited about? When I was a little younger, I didn't care whether it was the 14th or the 29th of February; it was just another ordinary day for me. But now I have a confession to make: I get affected by all the hype about the day of hearts.

In the office where I work, our guard, Mang Loloy, has this irritating ritual of tallying how many roses go to which department on Valentine's Day and announcing the final result to everyone. On the 12th floor, our department has always gotten the smallest number of roses sent although there are about 300 of us, a majority of whom are women whose ages range from 22 to 40, with 90 percent having no boyfriends.

At the end of the day, Mang Loloy just loves to wonder aloud, "*Bakit walang bulaklak sa* Internal Audit?" And through the years, he has formulated his own theory about the reason so few flowers get delivered to our department: "*Masusungit kasi ang mga* auditor."

I have thought of just buying flowers and having them delivered to my friends in the office just to make Mang Loloy shut up. After all, we are 16 in our group and if everybody receives a bouquet then it would call for a grand celebration. We would have scored a landslide victory over the other two departments which share the 12th floor with us.

I hate to admit it, but I get affected by that stupid contest Mang Loloy has invented. And my feeling doesn't improve when I see so many girls standing along Ayala Avenue and holding their beautiful bouquets as I wait for my ride home. I can't help but feel envious and depressed. Then I would silently ask myself, "*Bakit ako wala?*"

Deep inside me I pray that I would receive a bouquet from him. I want to know someone loves me and he is willing to shell out a few hundred bucks to buy me flowers.

Some people say that having a relationship doesn't guarantee that one will be happy. I can't agree or disagree. I've never had a relationship in my whole life.

Where is that guy who wants to give someone a bouquet of red roses on Valentine's Day but doesn't have anyone to give it to? I am here!

Sometimes I can't help but ask myself, "What is wrong with me?" Why can't I get a decent boyfriend who will give me flowers on Valentine's Day? Why is it that other girls have boyfriends and I don't?

When I look at the mirror, the image that stares back at me doesn't look too bad. I'm not ugly. There are some girls who are uglier than me but they have boyfriends. I am a good citizen. I obey rules and regulations. I pay my taxes. I am not afflicted with a life-threatening disease like AIDS. My friends say I am a very loving person. And I agree. When my dog died, I cried for months. If I can feel so much love for a dog, I guess I am capable of loving another person just as deeply or maybe even deeper. I have good genes, so he'll be assured of having beautiful and intelligent kids. I'm pretty smart too, so he won't get bored with me. I can talk about anything under the sun. If he wants peace and quiet, I can shut my mouth.

What do guys want in a girl? The Maria Clara type? One who prays the rosary three times a day? One who keeps quiet even though she's hurt? One who just cries quietly and leaves everything to God? One who agrees to everything he says? But hey, I am not an echo chamber! I guess, if this is all they want, I will never have a boyfriend until the day I die.

On the over hand, Winnie Monsod has her Christian. Loren Legarda has her Tony Leviste. Che-Che Lazaro has her Delfin. I don't think these women are the embodiment of Maria Clara and yet they are happily married.

My friends and I have agreed that if we reach the age of 35 and we still don't have boyfriends, we'll go to Saint Jude (the Patron Saint of Hopeless Cases) and pray a novena. It's a joke, of course, but some of them are already seriously considering the idea.

Personally I find it repulsive. Do I have to recite a structured prayer for nine consecutive days just to have a boyfriend? Give me a break!

I wish I had entertained suitors when I was still in college. I wish I had never listened to my mother's theory that love and studies didn't go well together and that anyway when I got a job I would meet a lot of guys who were also professionals. Well, that's true: I've met a lot of guys who are professionals. But most of them are either married or gay.

I wish I could erase Feb. 14 from the calendar. Hmmm, maybe I will just sleep on that day and tell the people in the office that I am sick or something. It falls on a Friday anyway and traffic on Edsa will again be at a standstill. There will be a lot of people crammed into the MRT and I will have to wait for at least five trains before I can squeeze myself into a coach.

If Cupid were only a bit smarter, then maybe things would be a little better. Why is Cupid stupid?

Jessica Zafra said that Valentine's and April Fools are one and the same occasion. If I may add to that, Valentine's Day is nothing but a grand conspiracy of mushy card companies, hotels, restaurants, flower shops, motels, etc. to get our money.

Anyway, just like any other day, Valentine's will quickly pass. What a consolation!

Princess Pam, 29, works in one of the offices along Ayala Avenue in Makati.

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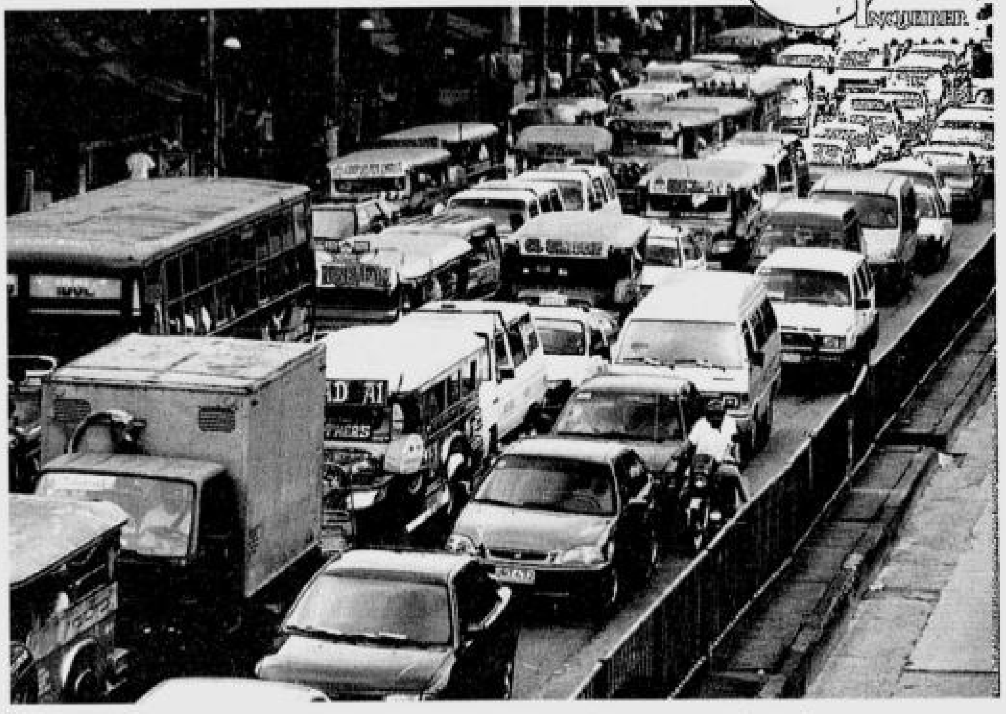
Plenty of reasons for road rage

LETTERS



IS road rage still something to be surprised about? Why wouldn't any law-abiding citizen who steps out of his house not be driven to rage? The wanton disregard and ignorance of the simplest laws and rules and even the lack of common decency among drivers, pedestrians and traffic enforcers make me sizzle!

Our horrible traffic can't be blamed on the suspension of the UVVRP by MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando alone. After all, how many people can drive two cars simultaneously? And how many people own more cars than they need? The UVVRP just benefits the public utility vehicles and the car manufacturers.

Since the MMDA chair can use a helicopter, may I suggest that he take a ride during peak traffic hours and bring a loud megaphone with him? That way, he can see what a mess traffic is simply because:

1. Selfish motorists are so impatient that they don't stick to their lanes and simply form new lanes where there ought not to be any.
2. Buses, jeepneys, AUVs and taxis stop either in the middle of the road or diagonally (especially on Edsa) to load and unload passengers.
3. Vehicles turn left or right from lanes that are farthest from the curb.
4. Traffic lights change without rhyme or reason. (Observe the ones at the Naia which have been reprogrammed to cause severe traffic jams.)
5. Traffic enforcers are clueless about traffic management or imposing discipline on erring motorists and pedestrians. (Watch the traffic build-up on the corner of Shaw and Wack-Wack or Ortigas and Santolan once the traffic enforcers make their appearance.)
6. Repair of roads is done so slowly even on major thoroughfares such as Edsa.
7. Pedestrians don't use pedestrian lanes and jump on to the road from wherever.
8. Streets are used as parking lots or garages by everybody.

Why would Fernando need a megaphone? To shout at the stupid, ignorant traffic enforcers, of course! They don't even have the common sense to see that something is horribly wrong when one lane is filled with vehicles while the opposite lane is empty.

It would help if the MMDA published the numbers motorists can call to report traffic jams, violations and accidents.

Let's all act civilized!

—BEBE LONTOC,
San Juan, Metro Manila

Special children

IT has been encouraging to see media giving time to members of the Down's Syndrome Association of the Philippines, who allow us a glimpse of their lives with their special children.

The term "special children" comes to us from the Americans, who are very conscious about the power of words, trying to avoid discriminatory terms like "Mongoloid" or "mentally retarded." "Special" refers to the particular needs that go beyond the usual ones we associate with child-rearing.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Besides Down's Syndrome, there are many other categories of special children. Some of the special needs arise because of injury or illness. An injury to blood vessels in the brain of a child, while still a fetus or shortly after birth, can result in cerebral palsy, where the child has poor muscle control and other problems with the nervous system. In the United States, cerebral palsy is reported in about 1 out of every 1,000 births.

Many of the special children's conditions are genetic, involving chromosomal "abnormalities." (I will explain the quotation marks in a while.) For example, a person with Down's Syndrome has three copies of chromosome 21, instead of the usual two.

These chromosomal anomalies are intriguing. The chromosomes contain DNA, our genetic blueprint. Most of us inherit these genetic instructions through 23 pairs of chromosomes, each pair contributed one from the father and one from the mother. Occasionally though, there may be one missing chromosome, or an extra one. The chances of these chromosomal abnormalities seem to increase with the age of the parents. Until recently, it was attributed mainly to the mother, but there are more medical reports coming out now looking at a link, too, with the father's age.

But we have to be careful about attributing Down's Syndrome to late pregnancies alone. Merck's Manual, a medical reference book, tells us that for a mother aged 45, the risk of chromosomal abnormality is 1 in 21, meaning there is a risk that 1 out of 21 children born to a woman at that age will have some kind of chromosomal abnormality, including, possibly Down's Syndrome. Note, however, that even a 20-year-old mother has a 1 in 526 risk of having a child with a chromosomal abnormality.

In fact, for the general population, it's estimated that 1 out of 800 live births will involve a child with Down's Syndrome. With about two million births each year in the Philippines, that means about 2,000 Down's Syndrome cases. Projecting from the statistics, the Down's Syndrome Association of the Philippines estimates that there may be about 95,000 Filipinos with the condition.

I'm giving the numbers so we can look more critically at the word "chromosomal abnormality." Yes, Down's Syndrome is "abnormal" only in the sense that it doesn't fall in the statistical norm. But 95,000 Filipinos with Down's Syndrome is not a small number, especially when you realize that also means 95,000 families whose lives are drastically changed because of one member with special needs.

For more secular people, the medical statistics simply remind us of the randomness out in nature. No one—nature, people, the gods—is behind this. For the more religiously inclined, a special child may be interpreted as a challenge, or a trial, from God. Generally, the view in the Philippines falls somewhere in between: parents will grieve, then say the child is *suerte*, bringing good luck to the family.

Given the wide range of conditions, the needs of special children will vary. Some special children will be dependent on their parents, or other relatives, for a lifetime. Some genetic conditions, such as the tongue-twisting glucose-6-phosphatase dehydrogenase deficiency (mercifully abbreviated to G6PD deficiency), simply mean the parents and later, the child himself or herself, will have to be specially conscious about the child being more prone to hemolysis (destruction of red blood cells) when they take certain foods like beans, or drugs like aspirin and chloroquine.

Ironically, the extent of this dependency is often aggravated due to society's discriminatory policies. Discrimination keeps people quiet about their special child, keeping the child isolated at home. And because no one talks about the special children, society is kept ignorant about their potentials.

Many people are not aware that given the chance, people with Down's Syndrome, autism and other conditions that affect mental development can function quite well. Tina Monzon Palma interviewed one parent on her radio show who said his daughter with Down's Syndrome was doing quite well in a school with "regular" children. In the United States and other developed countries, it is not unusual to see people with Down's Syndrome employed in offices as clerks, messengers, utility persons, the jobs allowing them to develop independence.

Last December I was on an airport train in Detroit, with a mother and her adult son, who clearly had Down's. They chattered away about friends and neighbors like any mother and son would. When we got to our destination, I realized the woman was disabled; her son had to help her get up. They got off the train and on to an escalator, then walked off into a terminal, the mother helped along by her son. I watched them as they walked, hands flying in the air in animated conversation. I am certain that the mother probably pauses, quite often, to think, "This is my special special child."

There's more to special children than children with extra needs from parents and caregivers. They're "special" in another way: precious people who challenge us to explore the full potentials of what it is to be human.

Next Tuesday, I will do a column about some of those challenges.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Fishers not joining food blockade

THE CALL of the Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines (ASAP) for a food blockade to demonstrate its disgust over the government's failure to curb meat imports and smuggling of other agricultural products has raised concerns on food security for the general public, specifically in Metro Manila.

The Alliance of Philippine Fishing Federations Inc. (APFFI) is a nationwide umbrella organization from different municipal and commercial fishing organizations all over the country. Its members are fishermen, subsistence and commercial, commercial fishing operators, fish processors, fish brokers, shipyard operators, ice plant operators, cold storage operators, machine shop operators and tin smith operators. Its main objective is to attend to the welfare of the fishing industry and supply the fish requirements of the consumers.

The APFFI's annual contribution to our nation's food security, employment and the economy are:

- More than 1,000,000 metric tons of fish are supplied for food.
- More than 357,984 persons directly employed in fishing companies or corporations and millions indirectly.
- More than 2.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.
- More than 73,975,444 estimated population are dependent on small and medium commercial fishermen's fish catch.
- A lot of ancillary industries rely on the commercial fishing sector such as the ice plants, fish processors, tin smiths, machine shops, spare parts suppliers, fish handlers, fish peddlers, market vendors, paints, steel, etc.

We cannot risk these huge responsibilities to the Filipino and to our nation.

The APFFI contributes more than 80 percent of the total fish requirements of Metro Manila and neighboring municipalities and cities.

We assure the general public that we will not be a part of the food blockade that ASAP is planning and we will continue to supply the fish requirements of Metro Manila and other provinces.

We, too, have differences with the government but we will not be a burden to the government.

—ALONSO L. TAN,
president, Alliance of Philippine Fishing Federations Inc.
DSFA Building, Navotas Fish Port Complex, Navotas, Metro Manila

Vendors' group denies endorsing Lacson

WE, members of the Metro Manila Vendors Alliance (MMVA), would like to deny reports (PDI, 2/6/03) that our group is one of the co-convenors supporting Sen. Panfilo Lacson's bid for the presidency in the 2004 elections.

Our group never imagined endorsing a candidate like Lacson who doesn't have any significant record of defending the poor vendors. Including the name of our organization, therefore, as one of his supporters is a pure and simple lie.

If one member of the MMVA affixed his signature in support of Ping for president, it was his own decision and not that of the entire MMVA membership which will not be deceived by the promises of *trapos*.

With MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando's constant use of force, martial law haunts the poor people. How can they think of adopting Lacson whose record in the fascist dictatorial regime of Marcos has not dimmed with the passage of time?

The time has come for our organization to realize that we cannot change our lives by merely satisfying the need to have another ruler in Malacañang. The time has come for us to realize that social justice for the poor people cannot be attained by listening to the promises of the same pathetic system which is incapable of making genuine reforms. To support a candidate like Lacson is unacceptable for the MMVA.

At present, force and violence are being employed to harass poor vendors. Many of us have already lost not just our goods but also our hope and trust in a government that cannot protect us from poverty and injustice.

—PEDRING FADRIGON,
president, Metro Manila Vendors' Alliance,
92 Masikap Ext., Barangay Central, Quezon City

UNDP clarifies context of report

THIS is with reference to the article, "UN scores RP government for weak agri policies," last Jan. 30. We wish to clarify the following:

1. The United Nations Development Programme commissioned the conduct of three studies: "The Philippine Governance Report," "Governance Assessment of the Philippines" and "State of Philippine Cities Report." The findings presented by your publication were based on a subsection of a report, titled "Philippine Governance Assessment Reports: A Synthesis," presented during the "Forum on Governance Assessment Initiatives in the Philippines: Building the Foundations of a Strong Republic" held last Jan. 29 at the Development Academy of the Philippines.

2. While the reports were supported largely by the UNDP, the opinions expressed in the reports were those of the writers and did not necessarily reflect the views of the UNDP.

3. While the synthesis report called on the government to prepare the agricultural sector for eventual tariffs removal, it stated that there were contending forces on food security that impact on the ability of the government to be consistent and effective in affecting either liberalization and deregulation in the agricultural sector. "The failure of the government to craft a consensus within and outside itself and manage these competing interests has resulted in a lack of focus and coherence."

4. The report continued that the bureaucracy suffered from a great degree of politization, which resulted in shifts in focus and strategies with changes in political leadership.

5. It also stated that the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP showed the "difficulties or the impossibility of implementing a compulsory Agrarian Reform Program under a liberal democratic regime, particularly one dominated by elite parties and when beneficiaries were marginalized."

6. The studies presented during the forum were undertaken by other organizations with strong focus on governance including the Ateneo School of Government, University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance, La Salle Institute of Governance and the Development Academy of the Philippines.

7. The conduct of the studies as well as the forum formed part of the establishment of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework-Working Group on Governance and Decentralization (UNDAF-WGGD). The UNDAF-WGGD aims to strengthen capacities of local government units to manage decentralized functions and anti-poverty programs; oversight agencies to practice transparent and accountable administrative and financial management; and civil society to effectively engage in various governance processes.

We hope that you will publish this letter to provide the appropriate context within which the reports were presented during the forum.

—THELMA GECOLEA,
communications specialist,
UNDP-Manila, Neda sa Makati Building, Amorsolo Street, Makati City

Rice imports must be regulated

THE GOVERNMENT policy of allowing farmers to import rice has muddled the whole government program to uplift the plight of our small rice farmers. Rice importation is not the solution. On the contrary, it is the last nail on the coffin for our farmers.

Proposed for importation this year is 800,000 metric tons of rice to be delivered every quarter. The first shipment of 150,000 metric tons will arrive in March during the harvest season. To facilitate the importation, the Land Bank of the Philippines, the bank that is mandated by law to support the farmers, will provide P7 billion in letters of credit. Expected to benefit from this importation scheme are the farmer-importers.

It sounds like a fairy tale: from rice farmer to trader and importer. But what's the true score? Can farmers really import, or will they be used as dummies to secure the letters of credit and get access to cheap imported rice that will flood the market during the harvest season?

The same thing happened last year and the impact on the price of palay was devastating. From P9 to P10 per kilo, the price of palay nosedived to P4.50 per kilo in some rice-producing areas of Mindanao, P6.50 in Central Luzon and P6 in Northern Luzon. And here we are about to repeat it.

The government should realize that letting an unregulated supply of rice into the market will lower the farm-gate price of palay. We are not against importation, if it is necessary, but we want it regulated. Why not let the National Food Authority import rice if that is necessary?

It is ironic that the government will provide P7 billion to dislocate the small rice farmers but it cannot provide enough funds to support small rice farmers. Estimates show that by extending P2 to P3 billion in credit to rice farmers' production inputs is enough to attain self-sufficiency in rice. The Department of Agriculture has the technology to realize it but it seems that the government does not have the political will to pursue a true rice self-sufficiency policy.

—EDUARDO F. LANDAYAN,
vice president for legal affairs,
Aniban ng mga Magsasaka, Mangingisda at Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (AMMMA-Katipunan)
Farmers Center, Philippine Coconut Authority Old Bldg., PCA Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

How come, PLDT?

PLDT is quick to disconnect, and so slow to reconnect.

How come? Can PLDT officials find it in their hearts to call before they cut, especially when the account they disconnect has no record of habitual delayed payment? Besides, they do not subtract from the subscriber's account any amount for non-service for reasons other than missing the payment deadline by an hour! Reasons like cable trouble, or the phone just went dead.

How come? How come?

—ODETTE ALCANTARA,
43 Hillside Loop,
Blue Ridge, Quezon City

Only the innocent can condemn

THIS refers to the "admitted acts" of Bishop Crisostomo Yalung. While I do not approve of what he has done, I do not condemn him for we are all human.

In the New Testament, the accusers brought to Christ a woman who was caught in the act of adultery. According to the Law of Moses, a woman who committed adultery should be stoned.

Christ, knowing they were leading Him into a trap, said to the accusers, "He who is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." They all dropped the stones and went away in chagrin because they were all sinners and were convicted by their own conscience.

After the accusers had left, Christ asked the woman, "Where are thy accusers? Has no man condemned you?"

She answered, "No man, Lord."

Christ then said to her, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen wrote that only the innocent may condemn. Christ who is perfect did not condemn the woman but even forgave her.

—LEON L. ASA,
1846 Asuncion St.,
Santiago Village,
Makati City 1208

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

CIA warns al-Qaida may attack US with 'dirty bomb' this week

WASHINGTON—Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network is an imminent threat to US interests and could attack targets in the United States or on the Arabian peninsula using a "dirty bomb" or poisons, CIA Director George Tenet told a Senate panel on Tuesday.

The nation's threat alert was raised last week to "orange," the second highest level, due to threats from multiple sources with strong al-Qaida ties, and the intelligence was "the most specific we have seen," Tenet told a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing.

"The information we have points to plots aimed at targets on two fronts—in the United States and on the Arabian peninsula. It points to plots timed to occur as early as the end of the haj (annual pilgrimage to Mecca), which occurs late this week," he said.

"And it points to plots that could include the use of a radiological dispersal device as well as poisons and chemicals," Tenet said. That device is sometimes called a dirty bomb because it can be built with radioactive materials that are not difficult to find, such as medical waste.

Tenet's public testimony came as the United States is preparing for a possible war against Iraq, North Korea has threatened to resume its nuclear program, and Iran said it was poised to enrich uranium to fuel its nuclear energy program.

"We see disturbing signs that al-Qaida has established a presence in both Iran and Iraq," Tenet said. "In addition, we are concerned that al-Qaida continues to find refuge in the hinterlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan."

He would not comment publicly on the location of bin Laden, who is suspected of masterminding the Sept. 11, 2001, hijacked airliner attacks against the United States. Another intelligence official said the al-Qaida leader was believed to be in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Tenet testified just hours before the airing of a new audiotape that intelligence analysts believe is of bin Laden's voice. On the tape, broadcast by the al-Jazeera satellite television channel, bin Laden endorsed suicide attacks against the United States and Israel and said any Arab ruler who supported an attack on Iraq was "an apostate whose blood should be spilled."

A senior US intelligence official said past attacks such as on a French tanker and an Israeli-owned hotel in Kenya last year had been preceded by al-Qaida messages to the public.

Another US official said: "Some occasions in the past when there has been a tape of some sort, it has been followed within a week or two by some terrorist activity. It's hard to know whether there is a cause and effect, but you cannot rule out that possibility."

"Al-Qaida is still dedicated to striking the US homeland, and much of the information we've received in the past year revolves around that goal," Tenet said.

Despite progress in disrupting the al-Qaida network, "the organization maintains the ability and the intent to inflict significant casualties in the United States with little warning," FBI Director Robert Mueller said.

"The greatest threat is from al-Qaida cells in the US that we have not yet been able to identify," he added. *Reuters*

Troops secure Heathrow, London

LONDON—Prime Minister Tony Blair on Tuesday ordered troops to patrol London's Heathrow airport and other sites in the British capital amid fears that terrorists might exploit a Muslim holiday for an attack.

Downing Street said the deployment of 450 soldiers to one of the world's busiest international airport—a move personally authorized by Blair—was "an ongoing operation in relation to a specific threat."

It would not reveal the exact nature of the threat, which came as Muslims around the world prepared to celebrate Eid al-Adha, one of the most important festivals in the Islamic calendar, from Wednesday.

But security experts said the measures taken pointed to the risk of a missile attack on a low-flying airliner, similar to one linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network on the coast of Kenya three months ago.

The beefed-up security came as a hardline Islamic leader in London said radical Muslims were ready to carry out suicide bombings in Britain, whose prime minister is the United States' strongest ally in the showdown with Iraq.

Soldiers were also brought in to step up security at a number of other sites across London linked to its transport and economic infrastructure, but police would not reveal where.

A defense ministry spokesperson said the troops would stay at Heathrow—which handles around 64 million passengers a year travelling on more than 90 airlines—"for as long as the Metropolitan Police requires our assistance." *AFP*

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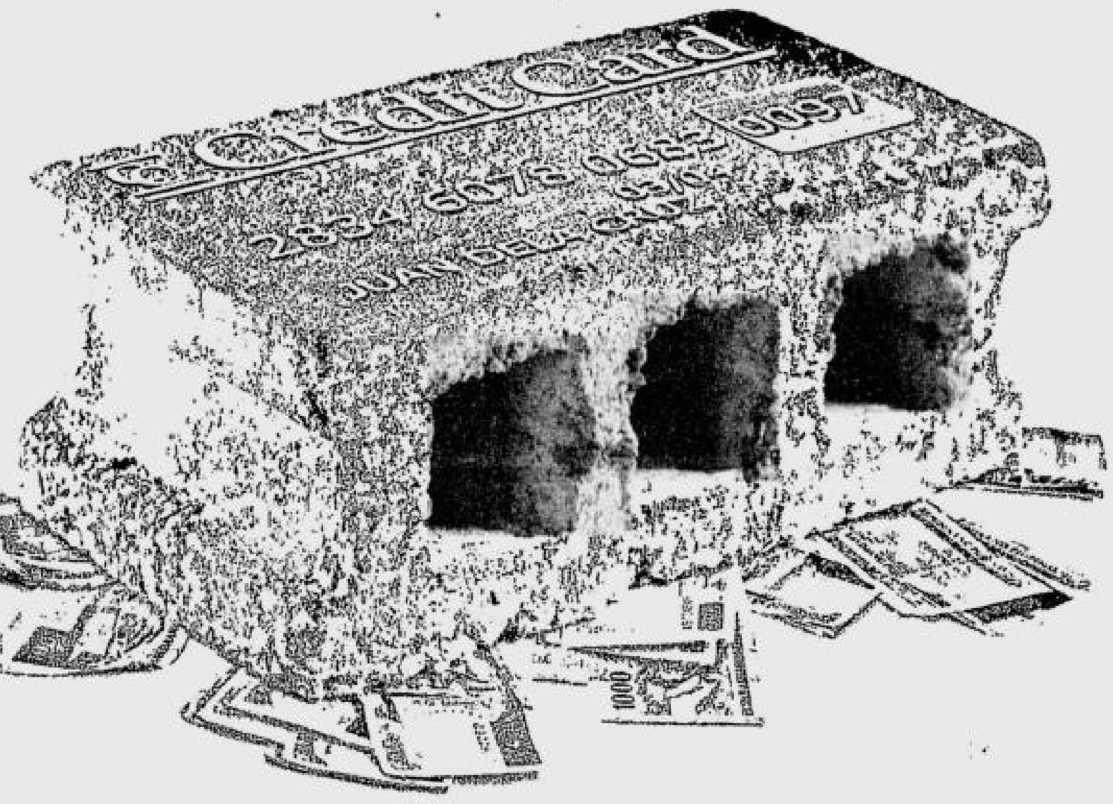

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ADAMSON ON ITS 71st YEAR

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In 1932, three brave Greeks figuratively moved mountains to establish the Adamson School of Industrial Chemistry. The dream was simple: create a school for soap making that can help spur an industry to develop in a young country still reeling from colonialism and neglect.

It was a humble beginning that saw the country reaping the fruits when chemists were churned out to contribute dramatically in the building of a skilled and educated population. Not even World War II stopped the school from fully evolving as a vital arm of the government in molding the mind of the Filipino Youth.

During the American Liberation, Adamson became one of the most devastated sites in Manila. Yet from the ashes of WW II, Adamson University grew to become one of the most reputable schools for engineers and other courses. In 1964, the Vincentian Fathers and Brothers took over and transformed it into a Catholic school. The fusion of technological education and Catholic training offers the students a unique advantage of getting the best of both. The technical skills as its founding fathers envisioned blended well with the spiritual zeal of the Vincentians who are devout followers of St. Vincent de Paul, the University's patron known for his unrelenting work on charity in his native France during his time.

Today, Adamson boasts of 51 courses with wide-ranging applications needed in the development efforts of the country. Its graduates continue to serve various sectors and industries providing a silent but critical push to nation-building.

The community of Administrators, Faculty, Employees and Students is taking the opportunity this year to also reflect on the greater challenges the country is facing as it strides forward to become a fully functioning member of the international community.

We want our part because our tradition is solidly built on becoming a winner against all odds just like what we did 71 years ago.

DR. GEORGE LUCAS ADAMSON
FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT

FR. LEANDRO MONTAÑANA, CM
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FR. ROLANDO DELA GOZA, CM
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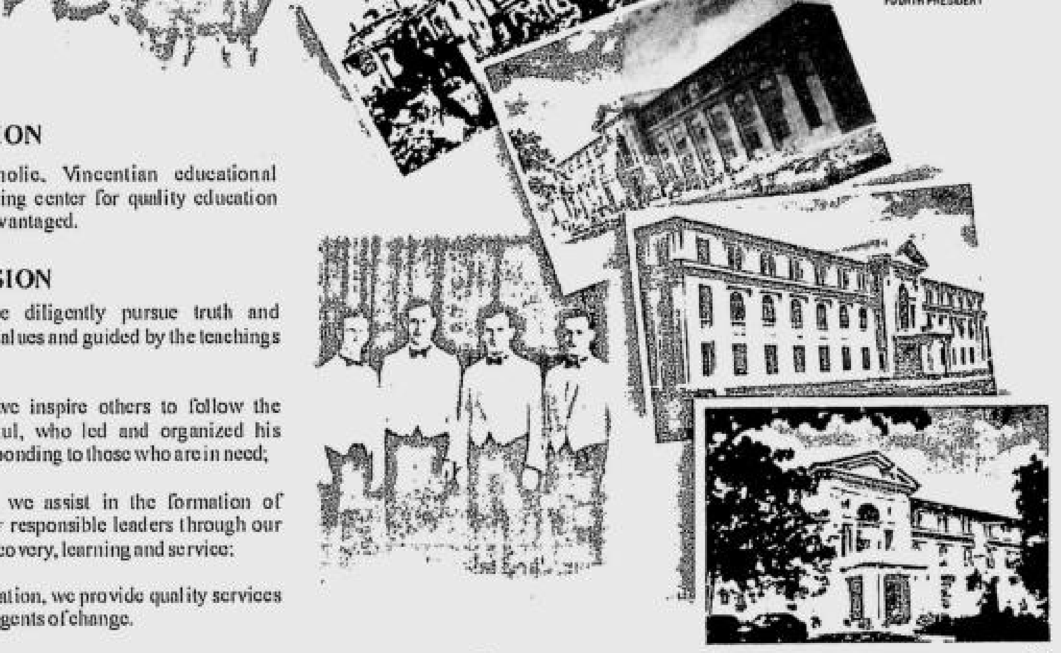

MALACAÑAN PALACE
Manila

MESSAGE

My warmest congratulations to the administration, faculty and students of Adamson University on the occasion of your *71st Founding Anniversary.*

I commend your institution for its seven decades of service to the Filipino people, particularly in the provision of quality education to the youth. This event is a fitting tribute to your unwavering dedication to empower our countrymen and women through education.

In today's age of globalization and rapid technological gains, quality education has become a vital factor in attaining progress. The ability of our people to address challenges and to harness the opportunities presented by today's technologies will determine our success in attaining and sustaining greater development.

As you celebrate this historic milestone, may you be inspired to help our young people take on larger roles as active contributors towards the betterment of our society. I urge you to intensify your efforts in providing quality education for the youth, especially the socially disadvantaged, as your contribution towards a strong Philippine Republic.

MABUHAY!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

MANILA
13 February 2003

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

MESSAGE

Our warmest greetings to the administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni of Adamson University on the occasion of your 71st Founding Anniversary on the second week of February 2003.

Universities play an important role in the attainment of the nation's socio-economic growth and sustainable development. We thus hope that Adamson University will continue her efforts to incorporate state of the art educational technology in the teaching and learning process, provide opportunities for the continuing education of her faculty and staff, and forge mutually beneficial relationships with industry and her neighboring communities.

We are confident that in working in partnership with other sectors of the society, Adamson University will be able to contribute significantly to the education and training of globally competitive Filipinos and the achievement of our country's goals.

May this celebration mark the start of another fruitful year for Adamson University.

Congratulations and mabuhay!

EL A.G.
ESTER A. GARCIA
Chairperson

VISION

Adamson University, a Catholic, Vincentian educational institution, is a recognized leading center for quality education particularly for the socially disadvantaged.

MISSION

As a Catholic University, we diligently pursue truth and knowledge, inspired by Gospel values and guided by the teachings of the Church;

As a Vincentian community, we inspire others to follow the example of St. Vincent de Paul, who led and organized his contemporaries in creatively responding to those who are in need;

As an institution of learning, we assist in the formation of competent, creative and socially responsible leaders through our commitment to excellence in discovery, learning and service;

As a catalyst of social transformation, we provide quality services that empower others to become agents of change.

CORE VALUES (5 S)

We pursue our vision and accomplish our mission from the following fundamental values that are the heart of who we are:

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

The highest standards of academic excellence and professionalism in service are the hallmarks of our educative endeavors. We regularly assess and transform our programs to make them effective for learning, discovery of knowledge and community service. Our service ethics manifests strong sense of responsibility, competency, efficiency, and professional conduct.

SPIRIT OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

The spirit of Saint Vincent inspires and permeates our learning community, programs and services. This spirit is shown in our sensitivity to the presence of God, compassionate service and the building of supportive relationships towards an effective service to persons in need.

SOLIDARITY

Drawn together by a common vision and mission we believe education is a shared responsibility and a collaborative effort where the gifts of persons are valued. Our learning community is a "family" where participation, teamwork, interdependence, communication and dialogue prevail. A culture of appreciation builds up our community, encouraging us towards excellence and professionalism.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Education at Adamson aims at developing a sense of social responsibility - a mark of an authentic Christian faith. Social responsibility leads us to empower the marginalized sectors of society through the creation of knowledge and human development. We are committed to work for the building of a society based on justice, peace, respect for human dignity and the integrity of creation.

SUSTAINED INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

Education is a lifelong quest whose primary purpose is the full and integral development of the human person. We are committed to provide programs for holistic development and continuous learning. Networking with other educational institutions, government agencies, industries, business, and other groups enhances our educational services.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

February 10-14 (Mon. - Friday)	
7:00am-5:00 pm	Carnival Festival - OZ Park South Side
February 13 (Thursday)	
7:00-8:00 am	Thanksgiving Mass - SV Grounds
8:00-8:10	Formal Declaration of the Opening of the 71st Anniversary Foundation
8:10-8:30	Flag Ceremony
8:30-10:30	Parade (San Marcelino St., UN-Taft Avenue Ayala Blvd. San Marcelino)
9:00-2:00 pm	Alumni Day - ST Chapel
10:30-1200	"PASIKLABAN 2003" - ST Quadrangle
12:00-1:00 pm	"Salu-Salo 2003" - College / Department / Office
1:00-5:00	BED Palaro 2003 - FRC Grounds
3:30-6:30	Institutional Award - Garden Plaza Hotel
5:00 6:00 pm	Band Concert - ST Quadrangle
February 14 (Friday)	
8:00 am -2:00 pm	17th Inter-High School Biology Quiz Contest (SV Little Theater)
9:00-9:30 am	Blessing of Media Center (Media Laboratory)
8:00-10:00	BED Field Demonstration (FRC Ground)
1:00-5:00 pm	Canticle Choral Fest - SV Parish Church
4:00 9:00	Engineering Night - OZ Grounds
6:00 pm -12:00 mn	BED JS Prom - Manila Midtown Hotel
February 15 (Saturday)	
8:00-10:00 am	PE Field Demonstration - SV Grounds
9:00-10:30	Arrival Honors/Parade in Review/ Presentation of Sponsors-ST Quad
10:00-12:00	Exhibition Games (AdU vs. PBA Team) - SV Gym
10:30-12:00	Alumni Convention - OZ AVR
12:00 noon	International Food Festival - Graduate School - CS 2nd Floor
February 16 (Sunday)	
6:00 pm	AdU Alumni Homecoming - Century Park Hotel

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KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue,
Pasig City, Philippines

MESSAGE

Warm greetings to the students, faculty, parents, alumni, and administrators of Adamson University on the occasion of your 71st Founding Anniversary!

For seventy-one years, Adamson University has continuously delivered quality education for the youth. Its walls were witness to the struggles and triumphs of its students. Its classrooms were venues for teachers to mold students who will one day become the pillars of our nation.

We hope that you will continue your tradition of staying true to the tenets of excellence and quality education.

The Department of Education is one with you in the task of providing quality education for our youth.

Congratulations

EDILBERTO C. DE JESUS
Secretary

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila
121 Arzobispo Street, Intramuros
P.O. Box 132
Manila, Philippines

MESSAGE

The story of any educational institution is inseparable from the history of our country. Every school's contribution to nation-building is very crucial and significant even up to now. From her portals come the future leaders in various fields who hopefully will dedicate themselves for God and country. A genuine learning center must teach students that gifts and talents are given for service and the common good.

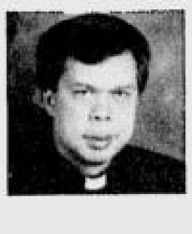
I greet the academic community of Adamson University. The university is a partner of the Church and state in the formation of our young people. You have a very important role to perform so that we may give birth to a society that is pro-God, pro-people and pro-nature. Our young people are the very foundation our society will be built upon. And the dreams and visions of the youth rest in your hands.

May the succeeding years be a rich harvest for this institution. If you imbue your endeavor with the love coming from God, certainly you will bear lasting fruits.

May our graduates continue to turn out to become gifted people who love God and country above all. May the education lead to a strong faith in God and selfless love for neighbor.

God Bless you!

+ Jaime Card. Sin
+ JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila



ADAMSON UNIVERSITY
Vincentian Fathers and Brothers

MESSAGE

The Adamson University community pauses to celebrate its Foundation Day. It is to remind ourselves of our mission to evangelize our people through education. In this, the University is one with other CEAP schools in its program: Transformative Education Toward Social Relevance. Even as we experience economic hardships, we still pursue year in and year out this educational enterprise, for we indeed believe that nothing cures poverty like education. Let us commit ourselves, Adamsonians, to be part in the building-up of a "strong republic", founded in justice and thriving in peace.

FR. JIMMY A. BELITA, C.M.
President

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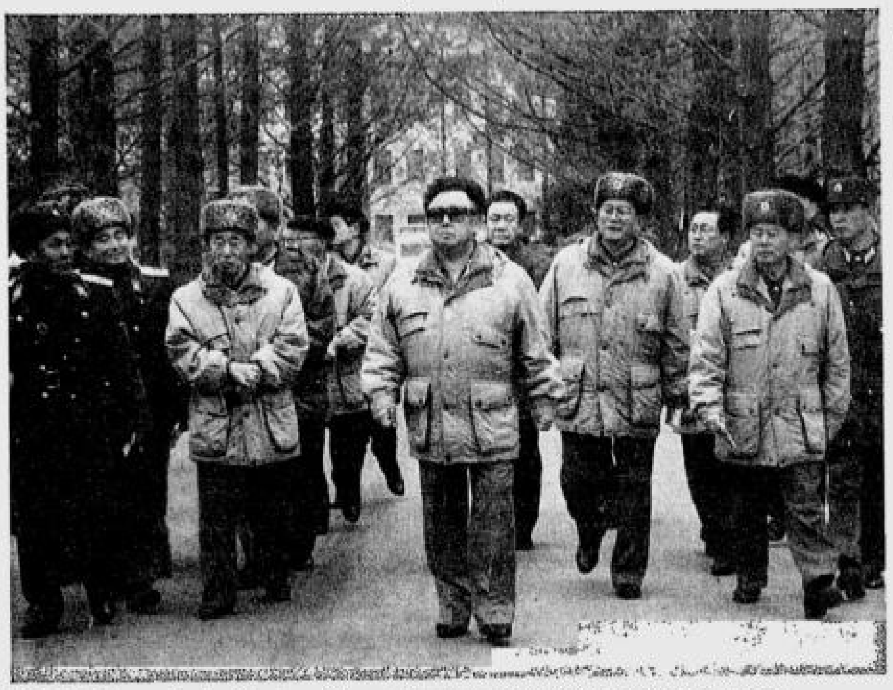

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il (center) walking with military officials during an inspection tour of the Academy of Logistic Officers of North Korea in an undisclosed location in North Korea on Feb. 10. REUTERS

N. Korea accuses US of planning invasion

SEOUL—North Korea accused the United States Wednesday of setting in motion invasion plans as the UN's atomic watchdog prepared a crucial vote that could pave the way for sanctions against Pyongyang.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is scheduled to hold a board meeting and is expected to refer North Korea's nuclear violations to the UN Security Council, empowered to impose an array of sanctions.

Defiant North Korea, eyeing US plans to reinforce its military presence with alarm, has said it would regard UN sanctions as tantamount to a declaration of war.

The Stalinist state's official media, without mentioning the IAEA vote, said Washington was launching a massive arms buildup as a prelude to an invasion of North Korea.

Frustrated by the failure of its drive to isolate the regime through diplomatic pressure, the United States has now activated its backup plan—the military option, the official Rodong Sinmun said.

"The US is turning to the use of force, its second option, now that its plan to put political and diplomatic pressure on the DPRK (North Korea) is bound to go busted," the ruling Workers Party mouthpiece said.

US President George W. Bush has said he would seek a peaceful resolution to the standoff but stressed last week that all options remained open.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, concluding a three-day visit to Seoul, said one option Washington has so far ruled out—direct negotiations with Pyongyang—was central to resolving the standoff.

"I don't think it is the moment to impose sanctions. I think sanctions will contribute to the opposite of what we want to take—which is to defuse the crisis," Solana told a press conference here.

Answering a direct appeal from South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung, Solana said the EU would step up engagement with North Korea and pledged to lead a delegation to Pyongyang soon.

Holding out for direct talks with the United States, North Korea has rejected Washington's drive for a multilateral approach to pressure Pyongyang to dismantle its alleged nuclear weapons programs.

Washington has refused negotiations with Pyongyang, saying it must first dismantle its nuclear programs.

Russia, with close diplomatic ties and keen economic interests in North Korea, is championing direct talks. China, Pyongyang's only other ally, has also insisted that the matter be resolved between the US and North Korea. *AFP*

Saudi beefs up security after stampede tragedy

MINA, Saudi Arabia—Saudi authorities beefed up security Wednesday as Muslim pilgrims carried on with a symbolic stoning of the devil following the deaths of 14 people in a stampede on Tuesday.

The extra measures targeted a two-tier bridge where three giant concrete pillars represent Satan. Muslims on their annual pilgrimage gath]er pebbles and hurl them at the pillars at a site where it is believed the devil first appeared to Abraham, his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael.

The head of the pilgrimage command and control center Brig. Abdul Aziz Saeed denied reports that the number of deaths had increased. Newspapers Wednesday said 21 people were wounded, but only two of them remain in hospital.

Those killed included four Pakistanis, three Indians, two Egyptians and one each from Sudan, Yemen and Iran. Two others remain unidentified.

The stampede occurred as groups of pilgrims were moving in opposite directions just before the bridge.

Until Tuesday, the pilgrimage—or haj—had been performed without major incident, despite the movement of huge numbers of people.

This year's procession has taken place under extra-tight security at a time of rising tension in the region brought on by mounting US threats to invade and occupy Iraq, a predominantly Islamic country and Saudi Arabia's northern neighbor.

The three-day stoning ritual, set to conclude Thursday, is the last stage of the pilgrimage and has been a flashpoint for stampedes in past years.

Last year's pilgrimage passed off without major incident, but 35 pilgrims died in a stampede the previous year. *AFP*

Mystery disease curbed, Chinese authorities say

China—Health authorities in southern China Wednesday sought to ease fears over a mysterious pneumonia epidemic that has killed five and left hundreds in hospital, but cautioned that the virus still posed a health hazard.

Officials in Guangdong province, where "atypical pneumonia" first appeared two months ago, discounted reports that it was spreading nationwide and sought to stem panic buying of anti-cold medicines and disinfectants that have gripped the region.

"Following the recent outbreak of atypical pneumonia around Guangdong province, authorities have taken vigorous measures that have effectively controlled the epidemic situation," the provincial government said in a faxed statement to AFP.

Local and national health authorities were working on identifying the strain and curbing the spread of the disease, it said.

Since it was first discovered in Heyuan city, some 150 km northwest of Hong Kong on Nov. 16, the virus has been detected in six other cities in the province.

Of the 305 cases discovered, 226 occurred in the provincial capital of Guangzhou, where two people have died, Huang Qingdao, head of the Guangdong Department of Health said.

Other cities affected included Jiangmen, Foshan, Zhongshan and Shenzhen—all of which lie in the Pearl River Delta region north of Hong Kong.

Two fatalities were recorded in Foshan and one in Jiangmen, with the youngest fatality being a 10-year-old boy, Huang said.

Fears of the disease have also spread to Hong Kong, Macau and the neighboring provinces of Guangxi and Hainan.

"This is in no way a terrifying disease and there is no need to panic," Huang was quoted by the Southern Daily as saying.

"The virus only poses a danger of infection if it can accumulate in the air to a certain density, so maintaining good air circulation is very important." *AFP*

Fly High

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Responding to numerous complaints of air & noise pollution in the Philippine skies, Sen. Robert S. Jaworski, Chairman-Committee on Environment & Natural Resources of the Philippine Senate, made a surprise visit at the IAU Aviation Center. Shown here being assisted by IAU President, Dr. Jovenal B. Toring (right), Sen. Jaworski discusses with aerospace engineering students & airline pilots the subject of minimizing noise pollution from various aircraft that take off and land at Mactan Cebu International Airport.

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US officials present plans for 2-year occupation of Iraq

WASHINGTON—US officials on Tuesday laid out plans for a two-year military occupation of Iraq in the event of an invasion and told wary senators that "enormous uncertainties" made it impossible to say whether troops might stay even longer or how much it would all cost.

Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the military and civilian administrators after a US invasion would report to Gen. Tommy Franks, commander of US forces in the Middle East.

Pressed for an idea of how long a military occupation would last before Iraqis could take back the government of their country, his colleague from the State Department, Marc Grossman, said he would guess "two years." But the two officials, at a hearing called to discuss the future of Iraq, said they did not know how the United States would manage the Iraqi oil industry, who would cover the costs of reconstruction if oil installations are damaged in the invasion or how they would install a democratic government.

"How this transition will take place is perhaps opaque at the moment. Hopefully there will be people who come up and want to be part of the government," Grossman said.

"There are enormous uncertainties," added Feith. "The most you can do in planning is develop concepts . . . That's our problem. We have been thinking this through as precisely as we can, given the uncertainties."

Some of the senators expressed incredulity at the state of the Bush administration's planning and several said they regretted Senate approval last year of military action.

"There is no informed consent. The American people have no notion of what we are about to undertake. They believe it will be swift and successful and largely bloodless," said Joseph Biden of Delaware, the senior Democrat on the committee.

"It's going to be expensive and it's going to take a long, long time. It's better to lay that out now," said Christopher Dodd, a Connecticut Democrat.

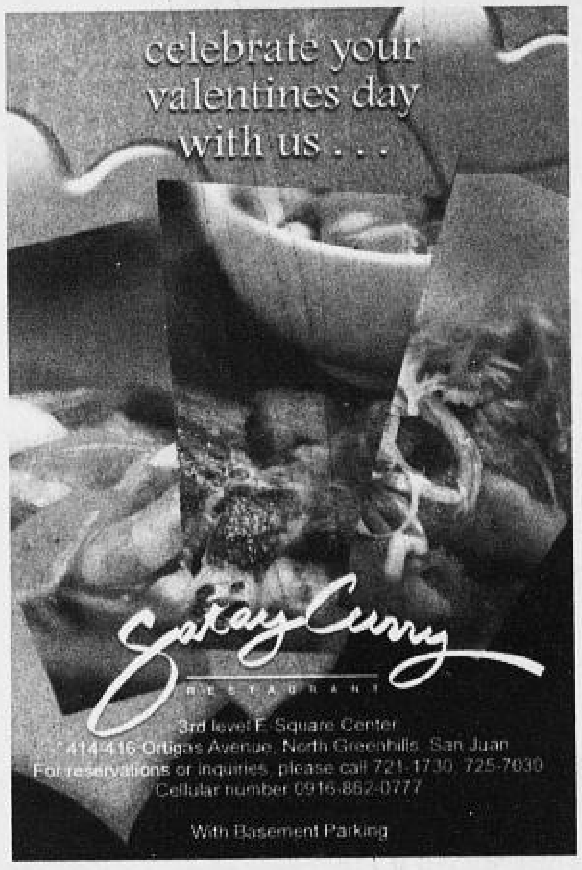
The Republican chair of the committee, Richard Lugar of Indiana, also faulted the administration for its belated and incomplete planning. "Oil will not go away until you make clear how you will manage the oilfields. It needs to be finalized urgently," he added.

The US officials repeated assurances that oil revenues under the military occupation would pay the costs of the Iraqi people's needs and would be the property of all Iraqis.

But Feith said: "The administration has not yet decided on the organizational mechanisms by which this sector should be operated. We shall be consulting on this important matter." Grossman dealt another blow to the aspirations of the Iraqi opposition in exile, which has been jockeying for advantage in the hope that the United States will overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the next few weeks.

He said the Iraqi opposition in exile would not be allowed to control decisions for all Iraqis. "While we are listening to what the Iraqis are telling us, the United States government will make its decisions based on what is in the national interest of the United States," he added. *Reuters*

BLUE ROSES FOR MY VALENTINE
Li Yan, a flower vendor from northeast China, places a bouquet of blue roses for display in her shop in Beijing, Feb. 12. The rare roses, imported from the Netherlands, are proving a popular item for young lovers in Beijing ahead of Valentine's Day despite their high cost of 100 yuan ($12) each. AFP



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Israel forces kill Palestinian, 8-year-old boy

QALQILYA, West Bank—Israeli forces shot dead two Palestinians, including an eight-year-old boy, and a Palestinian gunman killed an Israeli in violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Tuesday.

The bloodshed followed Israel's cancelation of plans to relax travel curbs on Palestinians for a four-day Muslim holiday. Israeli officials said the clampdown was necessary to prevent planned suicide attacks in Israel.

Palestinian hospital officials in the West Bank city of Qalqilya said the eight-year-old died after being hit in the chest by gunfire from troops attacked by stone-throwers. They said 10 other Palestinians were wounded.

Israeli military sources said soldiers in Qalqilya had fired at three Palestinians who had thrown petrol bombs at them. The sources said they had no immediate information about Palestinian casualties.

In Bethlehem, also in the West Bank, a Palestinian gunman killed an Israeli near the Church of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, witnesses said.

The Israeli's identity was not immediately released. After the incident, Israeli soldiers searched Palestinian homes and the Army slapped a curfew on Bethlehem.

Earlier in the day, troops killed an armed Palestinian in the Gaza Strip near an Army post on the border with Israel, the military said.

Israel's decision to continue the travel restrictions it has imposed in a 28-month-old Palestinian uprising for statehood prevented Palestinians from visiting relatives and friends in other towns during the Eid al-Adha holiday ending on Friday.

"Israel's tightening of the siege on Palestinian cities exacerbates the human catastrophe in the Palestinian territories," Palestinian cabinet minister Saeb Erekat told Reuters.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Ahmed Korei, a top Palestinian official, had met last week to discuss a possible Israeli Army pullback from West Bank cities where Palestinian security services undertook to prevent attacks by militants.

At least 1,825 Palestinians and 701 Israelis have been killed in the revolt led by Palestinian militant groups, which erupted after talks on Palestinian statehood in territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war broke down. *Reuters*

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And I can say hi, I miss you, what time will you be home, I'm making meatloaf for dinner so you better not be late, I love you, see you tonight.

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40 cents won't make the oceans contract or the continents move. Heck, 40 days of prayers wouldn't change the distance between me and you. But for 40 cents, I can have you so near I can hear your voice in my ear (closing my eyes, it's as if you were beside me).

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– From the journal of Shiloah

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Nasa: Universe a 'teenager'

WASHINGTON—Scientists using a robotic Nasa probe have determined with precision the age of the universe—13.7 billion years—and figured out when stars began to shine.

Astronomers have been closing in on these numbers for decades, but a spacecraft now about a million miles (1.6 million km) from Earth was able to look back to nearly the dawn of time to find the answers, Nasa researchers said on Tuesday.

Stars started shining just 200 million years after the theoretical Big Bang, scientists said in announcing findings of the so-called WMAP mission, which gazed on the universe when there were no stars, no galaxies, nothing except minute differences in temperature.

These temperature differences were as little as one-millionth of a degree, but that was enough to create vast hot and cold spots that signaled the beginning of the clumping that eventually became every known structure in the universe, the scientists said.

WMAP—short for Wilkinson Microwave Anisotopy Probe—looked back in time to just 380,000 years after the Big Bang explosion that many astronomers believe gave birth to the universe. That is further back in time than even the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope can see.

The image WMAP produced is a view of the entire sky seen as a spotted oval, with hot areas indicated by yellow and red and cool ones by blue and turquoise.

An earlier Nasa probe, the Cosmic Background Explorer, produced similar colorful ovals in 1992, but where the earlier craft saw blobs, WMAP created detailed mosaics of color, a much sharper cosmic "baby picture."

Reuters

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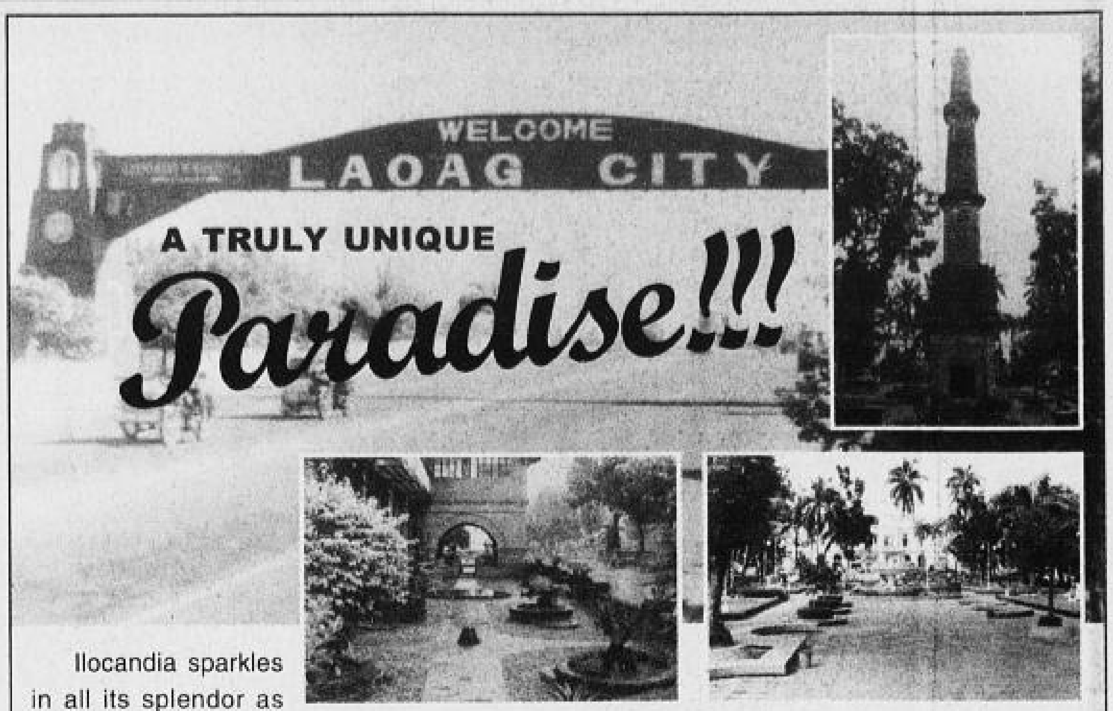
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ROUNDUP

Parricide

SAN JOSE CITY—A farmer hacked his son to death Sunday after he was peeved by the younger man's taunting. Police said Felix Ramos, 51, was charged with parricide for killing his 25-year-old son Randy. Ramos said his son's behavior made him lose his temper. ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Cop killed

CABANATUAN CITY—A policeman in Gapan City was killed Sunday when his bicycle was bumped by a passenger bus here. SPO2 Aquino Abaya, 51, died of head injuries after the Manila-bound ES Transport Service bus accidentally hit his bicycle. Bus driver Antonio Torres of Caloocan City surrendered to the police. In Ilocos Sur, a police officer was shot and killed by a man during a birthday party Monday in Santiago town. Reports said P03 Eric Novida, 28, of Candon City punched Fernando Corpuz during the party due to an argument. Corpuz, armed with an Armalite rifle, shot Novida while Novida was walking home. ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

'Spy' slain

NAGA CITY—The New People's Army in Libmanan, Camarines Sur meted the death penalty to a militiaman for his alleged active involvement in military operations. Diwata Resureccion, public information officer of the Bagong Hukbong Bayan-Libmanan, said in a press release that a certain Norman Nazareno was executed on Feb. 1 after the people's court allegedly found him guilty of crimes against the revolution and the people. Nazareno served as spy to government soldiers and helped identify civilian supporters of the NPA. ***Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

NPA captured

DAVAO CITY—Army soldiers arrested a team leader of the New People's Army in Barangay Astorga, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur on Saturday. The suspect, Saipan Banawag, 33, was brought to the Sta. Cruz police station. The soldiers seized a .38-cal. revolver and a hand grenade from Banawag, alleged team leader of the NPA's District 11, Front Committee-51 of the Southern Mindanao Regional Committee. Police said the suspect was wanted for murder and had escaped from the Provincial Rehabilitation Center in Matti, Digos City. Banawag reportedly joined the underground movement right after he bolted jail last year. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

BI office

GLAN, Sarangani—The Bureau of Immigration has opened a sub-office here on Monday. The BI chief Andrea Domingo said the sub-office will serve the adjoining municipalities of Glan in Sarangani and Jose Abad Santos and Sarangani Islands in Davao del Sur in documenting illegal aliens in the areas. Domingo said the opening of a BI satellite office was prompted by a resolution passed by the Sangguniang Bayan of Glan asking the BI to set up an office in the town. The BI official said a big number of Indonesian nationals locally known as "Maruri" have been residing here for quite a long time. Last month, the BI launched a year-long amnesty program aimed at legalizing the status of Indonesian nationals born and now residing in the country. The BI waived the penalties against overstaying and unregistered Indonesians to encourage them to avail of the program. The BI vowed to run after and prosecute illegal Indonesian nationals living in this country after the lapse of the government's amnesty program. Three years ago, the Indonesian government sought the help of the Philippine government not only in tracking down, but also in finding out the total population of illegal Indonesian nationals living in the country. In a census, the BI managed to register about 8,000 Indonesian nationals. But it is still trying to reach out to some 4,000 Indonesians who have not yet registered. According to the BI, there were about 12,000 Indonesians living in the country. "When all of them are registered it is easier to send them back to their homeland if their government is already prepared and ready to accept them back," Domingo said. She said the Philippine government and Indonesia is observing "reciprocity" by treating each other's subjects with respect and dignity. Both countries protested the harsh treatment by Malaysian authorities in rounding up and deporting Filipinos and Indonesians illegally staying in Malaysia. ***Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

9 of 17 NPA rebels in gov't surrender rites turn out fake

THIS time, the rebels are genuine, so says the military. Members of the MILF take a pause for prayer during surrender rites aboard the Philippine Navy ship BRP Bacolod City Feb. 11. AP

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Nine out of the 17 persons claimed by the National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine Air Force as New People's Army members who surrendered turned out to be bogus.

On Monday afternoon, the nine supposed rebels sought the help of the media in straightening things up.

"We were duped. The presentation made by the NBI and the PAF last Jan. 31 was just a hoax," said Jojo Hudasan, one of those who were presented as NPA rebels.

Hudasan and the eight others were supposed to be presented to Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong during Datumanong's visit here on Jan. 31.

An unidentified NBI agent herded them along with eight other people to the Buayan Satellite Airport here from Manila.

Apparently, Datumanong had been informed earlier that some of the supposed rebels were fake.

He did not show up during the presentation.

The NBI and the PAF then presented them to reporters.

Later, relatives said Dudaem Guillano, 20; Jojo Hudasan, 23; Simong Hudasan, 18; Kito Labuayan, 20; Jay Cafion, 20; Efren Tigaldo, 20; Lory Labuayan 18; Flores Cafion, 16 and Rory Cafion, 20, were farmers who sometimes harvest timber and rattan for added income.

Pablito Escovillo, chair of Barangay Miasong in Tupi, South Cotabato said the nine were apparently used to boost the image of the NBI and the PAF.

He said that on Jan. 30, Anastacio Kansing, an alleged financier of illegal logging in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, summoned them.

Kansing, who owed them money, told them to meet him at Samlang in Barrio Blaan in Malungon, Sarangani Province because he would pay them there.

Upon reaching the area, the nine were not paid but again told to proceed to Kansing's house in Barangay Apopong here the next day to finally collect their money.

After receiving their payment, Escovillo said the nine fake rebels were told to board a military truck, which brought them to the Buayan Airport.

"Before they were presented as NPA surrenderers, Kansing told them to speak only in the Blaan dialect," he said.

Efforts to bring the rebels back to the folds of the law dragged some members of media in Butuan City.

A media group in the city has initiated to open up lines of communication between local government officials and top communist cadres for a peaceful dialogue.

Celso Licup, interim president of Professional, Responsible and Organized Media of Caraga (Pro-Media Caraga) said it was about time journalists take an active role in helping bring peace to the region.

"We are just reliving (the) true essence of media by opening up communication lines between rebels and government," Licup told the INQUIRER.

He said the lack of communication between the government and the rebels have contributed to a deepening distrust and misunderstanding. ***Aquiles Zonio and Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Scout Rangers in civilians' beating face trial

BACOLOD CITY—The Army's 3rd Infantry Division has recommended that court martial proceedings be held against several Scout Rangers who are accused of beating to death a civilian and torturing five others in November.

Col. Victor Ibrado, 303rd Infantry Brigade commander, said Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Alcasid, 3rd ID commanding general, made the recommendation to Lt. General Gregorio Camiling, Philippine Army chief.

Ibrado, however, said he did not know who and how many Scout Rangers would be made to undergo court martial proceedings.

But he said Alcasid recommended that the court martial proceedings be convened at the Philippine Army headquarters in Metro Manila because the soldiers are assigned to different Army units.

If convicted, Ibrado said the soldiers would be dismissed from the military service. They would also face criminal charges in court.

The recommendation stemmed from the complaint of the human rights group Karapatan and its allied organization that accused members of the Scout Rangers of torturing six civilians following an encounter with communist rebels in November in Barangay Manlocahoc, Sipalay City, about 178 kilometers southwest of this city.

One of the victims identified as Moreto Arcadenia later died. The soldiers allegedly beat up the civilians to make them confess their supposed participation in the encounter, the group claimed.

Also allegedly tortured were Marcelino dela Cruz Romano, Demetrio Betongga, Moises Arcadenia, and his sons Ely and Eddie. Moreto was also a son of Moises.

The five were charged with homicide and frustrated homicide in December for their alleged involvement in the encounter with government troopers in Sipalay that resulted in the killing of Cpl. Alan Cahuya, and the wounding of Pfc. Ansgar Mosqueda.

The militant groups earlier tagged soldiers belonging to the 61st Infantry Battalion as the ones who tortured the six civilians following an encounter with the rebels.

But the military later claimed that the soldiers were Scout Rangers and were not from the 61st IB. The Scout Rangers, who were on a test mission in southern Negros, were the ones who arrested the civilians, the military said. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Coast Guard studies charges vs boat owner

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard is studying what charges to file against the owner of a motorized banca that sank off Sarangani on Tuesday morning.

This developed as the Coast Guard clarified that only one passenger, and not three as earlier reported, was killed when MB Lanelen capsized.

Lt. Armand Balilo, PCG spokesperson, said that doctors Laudencio Mendoza and Marlon Maranon survived and were not killed in the sea tragedy.

Philip C. Tubeza

Farmers fear disastrous effects of rain on onion farms

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

CABANATUAN CITY—Sudden rainshowers on Tuesday and Wednesday in certain parts of Nueva Ecija have sent shivers to onion growers in the province.

The farmers fear the rains because newly harvested onion bulbs or those ready for harvest easily rot when wet.

In Bongabon town, called the "Onion Capital of the Philippines," Cita Carpio, secretary of the town's municipal board, said onion growers in Barangay Vega were starting to harvest onions when the rains came.

Carpio said farmers in the town were worried that if rains continued coming in the next few weeks, they would suffer huge losses because the rains would degrade the quality of their onions.

Most of the onion plants in Bongabon will start to produce bulbs in mid-March.

Bongabon farmers usually plant onion in at least 2,500 hectares of land.

Farmers in nearby towns and cities of Nueva Ecija also plant onions in relatively big areas.

Reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed that rainshowers were experienced in the eastern part of the province this week.

Demy Campo, chief meteorological officer of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Meteorological Services Administration station here, said the isolated showers were caused by the abrupt changes in weather.

He said there was sudden increase of temperature experienced here since Saturday, which caused evaporation and cloud heaviness.

Execs' feud mars rites for martyred Antique gov

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

PANDAN, Antique—Infighting between leaders of Antique province marred the 17th death anniversary of former Antique Gov. Evelio Javier on Tuesday.

For the first time in 16 years, two separate ceremonies were held simultaneously to honor the martyrdom of Javier, marking the deep rift between the two former political allies.

Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez, along with Sen. Loren Legarda, led the ceremony in this town, about 124 kilometers north of the capital town of San Jose where Javier's younger brother, Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier, led a separate rite.

In her speech before about 1,000 of her townmates, Perez said she decided to hold this year's commemorative rites in Pandan to show that the slain governor "belongs to all of us Antiquenos."

She said Evelio's memory was "mixed with politics" in the ceremonies held in San Jose. "We must put a stop to that . . . We must maintain the purity of Evelio's memory," said Perez.

Representative Javier led the ceremonies in Barangay Malaiba in San Jose which Evelio frequented when he was governor.

He led the ceremonial lighting of candles at the tomb of his brother and the laying of a wreath at the marker at the Evelio B. Javier Freedom Park where the former governor was shot.

The congressman belittled the holding of separate ceremonies. "What is important is we remember Evelio's martyrdom," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Francis Gideon Javier, the elder son of the slain governor, did not attend any of the ceremonies. He said he was "busy" and opted to attend Mass at the Ateneo.

Representative Javier and Perez were allies during the May 2001 elections but their partnership turned sour later.

Majority of the 17 town mayors supportive of Representative Javier initiated a recall proceeding against Perez.

The governor filed a complaint against the congressman before the House committee on ethics for his alleged interference in the affairs of the province.

Legarda, whose mother comes from this town, said the people should relive the values and dreams of Evelio. She called on Antique politicians to "work together, love each other and support each other regardless of party affiliation."

"Let us not forget that Evelio died so that we will unite and love each other," she said.

Heavily armed men gunned down Evelio at the plaza of San Jose on Feb. 11, 1986 during the canvassing of votes in the "snap" presidential elections.

He was then a leader of the opposition against the Marcos dictatorship.

Former Antique Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador, who supported Marcos, has been tagged as the mastermind and is now detained at the Antique Provincial Jail.

Pacificador and 16 others are facing murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder charges before the sala of Judge Rudy Castrojas of the Antique Regional Trial Court Branch 12.

On Jan. 13, Castrojas denied bail to Pacificador and 15 of his co-accused. Pacificador has appealed the order.

Also accused were Pacificador's son Rodolfo, Eduardo "Boy Muslim" Iran, lawyer Avelino Javellana, former Philippine Constabulary Capt. John Paloy, Vicente Vegafria, Ramon Hortillano, Henry Salaver, Eleazar Idemne, Rolando Bernardino, Oscar Tiauson, Henry Seguerra, Jimmy Punzalan, and four persons known only as Akang, Noynoy, Tatang and Dolfo.

'LUXURIES' IN JAIL

Ecleo's laptop, cell phone seized

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr. was found to be still enjoying luxuries that a prisoner is not supposed to enjoy, putting the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC) jail management in hot water again.

Privilege

After he was allowed to sleep with his girlfriend last year inside his cell, Ecleo was given the privilege to chat with his friends and relatives from the outside through a laptop computer and a 7650 Nokia cellular phone.

Ecleo was believed to have been using this kind of privilege for two weeks already, but it was discovered only last Monday by Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) inspectors who went to BBRC to investigate the escape of an inmate at dawn Monday.

Because of the incident, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology assistant regional director for Central Visayas Senior Supt. Reynaldo Berdin ordered the relief of Senior Insp. Valentino Coderias, the jail's officer in charge.

Sacked

Coderias is the second BBRC official who lost his post because of special privileges given to Ecleo. Jail warden Lita Quilaton was also relieved in October after reporters caught Ecleo with a young woman inside his isolation cell in late September.

Ecleo, "supreme master" of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA), is in jail on parricide charges for the murder of his wife, Alona Bacolod-Ecleo, in January last year.

Rooftop

Ecleo has since been transferred to an infirmary built on the roof deck of the jail.

On Monday, BJMP officials went to the rooftop to inspect the area where the escapee passed through but instead found Ecleo's laptop.

Inmate Edwin Cruz who has pending five criminal charges including robbery, was able to bolt from jail around 3 a.m. Monday by climbing up the steel post supporting the roof of the basketball court to reach the catwalk at the rooftop.

Cruz climbed over a barbed wire railing and slid down a water pipe at the side of the jail compound. JO1 Pedro Estrellanes detected the escape and fired two warning shots.

Army exhumes remains of NPA purge victims

MAKILALA, Cotabato—The military here on Monday exhumed the skeletal remains of at least six suspected communist rebels allegedly executed by their comrades in the 1980s.

Second Lieutenant Franz Diamante, company commander of the Charlie Company of the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion, said it was a former New People's Army rebel who led them to the graves in Barangay Batasan.

Diamante said the returnee also provided them the names of two of the victims—Jing Arancon and Roque Antipas. The other victims, who hailed from M'lang, North Cotabato, were only identified by their aliases.

Antipas' skeleton still bore signs of an electric wire tied to its wrists.

Diamante said the informant has also vowed to lead the military to other graves of victims of the NPA's purge of cadres suspected of spying for the military or of infiltrating the underground movement.

"Thirty more skeletal remains are to be exhumed," he said.

In the 1980s, the NPA launched a massive purge on suspicion that some of its members were conniving with the military. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

15 rescued as boat sinks in Davao Sur waters; 10 missing

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Fifteen persons were rescued by members of the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Air Force from an area where the ill-fated M/B Lanilyn capsized early Tuesday morning.

Ten of the passengers remain missing, while only a 4-year-old girl was confirmed dead from the accident.

The body of the lone fatality, Shiela May Puertos, was found by a rescue team floating in the high seas.

The motorized boat, bound for Balut Islands in Davao Del Sur, left at around 11 p.m. Monday from Puting Bato, Calumpang here. It was loaded with cargo and 26 passengers, including four crew members.

Waves, winds

The tiny sea craft was navigating two nautical miles off Tampat Point in Glan Town, Sarangani Province when at around 2:30 a.m. it was battered by strong winds and waves.

The Coast Guard Station here, led by Lt. Cmdr. George Ursabia Jr., received a distress call from Kabalikat Civicom, a communications group, around 10:15 a.m. Tuesday.

Other government agencies and rescue groups were immediately alerted and a rescue operation was launched.

The first three survivors were picked up 12 hours after the boat capsized in a municipality of Sarangani about five nautical miles away from where the tragedy took place.

The second rescue team on board two Philippine Navy vessels rescued 10 passengers while the third rescue team on board two Philippine Air Force rescue helicopters saved two more passengers a few hours later.

Survivors

The survivors were seen by the rescue teams clinging on to several "payaw," a device installed by fishing operators to serve as fish sanctuaries in the high seas.

Marfin Tan, a fishing magnate and commander of the Philippine Navy Auxiliary unit here, dispatched several of his fishing boats to continue searching for the remaining 10 missing passengers.

Tan, once a fisherman before becoming a business tycoon, said the strait between Glan and Balut Islands, a two-hour ride by outrigger boat, is known for its strong waves and underwater currents.

Navy Capt. Edcel Lumayag, commander for Northeastern Mindanao of the Philippine Navy, told reporters here that they were not giving up on the rescue operations and the search for the remaining passengers.

Although the search continues, Lumayag has admitted that there is about a 40 percent chance that the missing passengers are still alive considering the turbulent sea condition in the area.

Capt. Anito Alfajardo, Coast Guard commander for Southeastern Mindanao, said they were studying the possible legal sanction that could be imposed against Barangay Chair Alex Astang of Mavias, Sarangani town in Davao del Sur, owner of the ill-fated M/B Lanilyn.

Charges

Alfajardo said M/B Lanilyn, an unregistered outrigger boat weighing less than three tons, was not authorized to ferry passengers.

He said the Coast Guard could hardly check the activity of this type of sea craft as its focus is concentrated on busy ports.

"The Coast Guard can't be in all places at all times," he said.

Ursabia said the solution to this problem is way beyond their level.

There is no established port here for outrigger boats plying the General Santos-Balut Islands route. Also, there is no other means of transportation between the two areas except through motorized boats.

The Philippine Navy said the government should find ways to set up a regular port here that would service light passenger sea crafts plying the General Santos-Balut Islands route. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Thirsty Baguio appeals for water 'donations'

BAGUIO CITY—While officials here have placed the filling up of Burnham Lake with water as their priority, residents are faced with the problem of another waterless summer.

Last week, the Baguio Water District advised residents to start storing water "for the impending water shortage."

But instead of helping BWD find water for the residents, officials instead ordered at least 33 private water firms to provide water for Burnham Lake to save the lagoon, a favorite tourist spot.

City Architect Ignacio Estipona said at least 3,500 cubic meters of water are needed to fill up the lake.

He said Mayor Bernardo Vergara had personally asked the water firms to donate water "in preparation for the fluvial parade and boat racing competition on Feb. 15."

The boat parade is part of the city's month-long Panagbenga or flower festival celebration.

"We have to fill up at least 20 centimeters of the lake for the boats to navigate smoothly," Estipona said. The lake's water level is only less than 1 centimeter.

Estipona said they suggested filling the lake with wastewater, which would be taken from the drainage tunnel adjacent to the lagoon, to avoid wasting potable water.

"But we are afraid that the 7,000 tilapia in the lake might die," he said.

Teresita de Guzman, BWD manager, said the expected influx of tourists for the Panagbenga would increase the water requirement by 90,000 cubic meters more.

This is in addition to the city's daily water demand of 112,000 cubic meters, way beyond the daily production of 35,000 cubic meters.

"We are expecting another round of water shortage in February until the summer months (but) that has always been the case. We have no other recourse but implement water rationing," she said.

The advisory is applicable until the summer season, she said. *Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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[2] Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of cholesterol lowering with simvastatin in 20,536 high-risk individuals: a randomized placebo controlled trial. The Lancet 2002 July, 360 (9326): 7-22.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

DAY 1: 13 February, Thursday

8:00 - 11:30 NN
"The CEO's Guide to Business Process Outsourcing in the Philippines"
Venue: Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel
Forum organized by ITECC, Digital Philippines and USAID/AGILE

11:30 - 1:00 PM
Official Opening Ceremony

2:00 - 5:00 PM
ITECC Plenary Meeting

5:30 - 7:30 PM
European IT Services Center (EITSC) Press Launch
Venue: Makati Skyline,
2nd Floor World Trade Center

DAY 2: 14 February, Friday

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
"Citizen-Centric Benefits of ICT: Bridging the Digital Divide"
Forum organized by the Philippine Communication Centrum Foundation (PFFC)

11:00 AM - 12:00 NN
CMM Certification Overview
Seminar organized by USAID/AGILE

3:00 - 5:00 PM
"Government IT Projects"
Seminar organized by the National Computer Center

5:00 - 6:00 PM
"Animazing Shorts: A Contest for Amateur Animator" Awarding Ceremony

7:00 - 10:00 PM
e-Services Philippines Welcome Night
(by invitation only)

DAY 3: 15 February, Saturday

10:00 - 11:00 AM
"Outsourcing in the Philippines"
Seminar organized by Digital Filipino

1:30 - 4:45 PM
"Open Source for the Enterprise and IT Outsourcing"
Organized by the European IT Services Center (EITSC)

Company Presentations and Product Launchings will be conducted during the 3-day event

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$371-M N. Luzon project starts

MEXICO, Pampanga—Describing it as a "ray of hope" amid war jitters, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri led here yesterday the groundbreaking of the $371-million North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) modernization project by the Lopez-led Manila North Tollways Corp.

Neri, who represented President Macapagal-Arroyo during the launch, said the project, delayed since it was conceived in 1997 during the Ramos administration, indicated that the economy was moving on.

He said the project, financed by foreign commercial banks and institutions led by the Asian Development Bank, demands no liability and debt burden from the government.

According to MNTC Chair Oscar Lopez, the delay due to stringent requirements by lenders had cost "quite a bit" to the corporation. The state-run Philippine National Construction Corp. operates the NLEX.

Jose de Jesus, MNTC president and chief executive officer, said under the project, the NLEX would be transformed by the contractor, the Leighton Contractors Asia Ltd., into a "world-class toll road system" in 24 months.

De Jesus, former public works secretary during the Aquino administration, dispelled reports that the project was "overpriced" and that the President did not come, reportedly on the advice of Public Works Secretary Bayani Fernando, because of this.

The project's cost, De Jesus said, was low in the construction industry. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

GMA visit to usher in new projects

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will unveil some of the most important rural infrastructure projects in Sulat, Eastern Samar when she visits the town on Feb. 15.

One of the projects, "Tulay sa Pangulo", a bridge that will be presented by Ms Macapagal to farmers, residents and officials of Sulat.

In a statement, Mayor Javier Zacate expressed delight over the projects, which were made possible through the poverty alleviation program of Ms Macapagal.

The bridge, Zacate said, would facilitate the delivery of goods from Sulat farmers to markets elsewhere and help bring basic services to the town.

The President will also inaugurate an electrification project of several Sulat villages dubbed "Oh Ilaw."

The villages that would benefit from the electrification are Mabini, A-et, Candalakit and Sitio Hamorawon.

Zacate said he and his employees are now busy preparing for the President's arrival on Feb. 15.

The President will also launch livelihood projects that will make funds available to Sulat during her visit to the town.

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Love and marriage: Mangyan style

By Madonna Virola
Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

MANGYAN people do not have a Valentine's Day like others do, but they live a communitarian spirit in which one would always want to share with another whatever one has, though already scanty, according to Enrique "Ingke" Tupaz.

And they have interesting love ways and traditions, adds the Mangyan community leader's 43-year-old wife Vivencia.

For instance, in ordinary cases, Vivencia, or Manang Vivi, says, the courtship period can last two to seven years. The suitor does things to please the young woman's parents, similar to the *pamanhikan* custom of the Tagalogs.

And in a return of good deed, the young man who has earned the blessings to be a son-in-law is given a *gulok* (bolo), a *kaldero* (pot) and other functional tools in family life by the women's parents.

In the traditional Mangyan way, courtship is not practiced. The parents are the ones who choose their children's partners. "They do not like lazy and dull men," says Manang Vivi.

Like the Chinese, the children cannot refuse their parents' wishes, she says. "That's why there are children who commit suicide."

Modern, too

But some Mangyan people, especially those who had attended school, prefer today's view that the child decides who to marry. "But not at 12 or 13 years old," Manang Vivi warns, saying the marriage would have the same difficult outcome.

The early marriages in the tribe could also be attributed to the young people not being able to go to school due to poverty, she explains. "Others rebel, that's why they get married early."

In her case, Manang Vivi says she did not allow tradition to force her to an early marriage. She waited until she was in her early 30s when she married Ingke.

Alangan Mangyan Roberto Mambo says courtship is practiced in his tribe.

It's like a *barkadahan* (group of young friends), Mambo says. About 20 girls and boys perform the *banggi*, the traditional form of singing, he says.

"The Alangans are good," Mambo joked. "No embracing, no arms over the shoulder. But now, the young ones are already malicious . . . television is their idol," he says.

Marriage

A newly married couple is made to sleep together on one mat in the house of the girl's parents for one week in the *balak lakoy*, a traditional Mangyan house that can accommodate 20 families.

"The two should always face each other while sleeping in order to receive grace in their marriage, but the boy cannot touch the girl," says Manang Vivi.

Another week is spent in the house of the parents of the boy and the same instructions are followed.

However, if a girl menstruates after the first night of sleeping together, the counting goes back to Day One. "It's bad luck," says Manang Vivi.

Intermarriage also happens. Mambo, 40, had married and broken up with a Tagalog woman. He cites personal reasons for their separation. The bottom line, he says, is that when one partner loses respect for the other, the marriage is on the brink.

He has four children with her former spouse, but no one stays with him. "I returned them all to the girl's family," he says.

Cultural differences also matter, Mambo says. He speaks with humor but one senses his desire to have kept his family intact.

Punishment

If a married man and a married woman elope, the elders will return them to their rightful partners but some punishment called the *pangao* is imposed on them. One form is the *pangao sa paa* in which the feet of the offenders are placed in two holes of a bamboo so that their movements are restricted in one place.

Anoher form of punishment is being fed salt.

A more dreadful form of warning is the *pugutan* in which the head of a chicken is cut off while a prayer is being recited. The Mangyan people believe that if the warning is not heeded, something unfortunate will happen to the erring party and he or she shall suffer difficulties in life.

The community will judge the couple, with the elderly acting as leaders.

"They are forced to reconcile," says Manang Vivi. If they do so, a hog will be slaughtered and brought to the celebration banquet, she says.

She, however, notes that there are no murder cases in the Mangyan community.

Old maid

"If a girl reaches 18 years old, she is already considered an old maid," says Manang Vivi.

But their tradition, like the non-Mangyan, she says, is more lenient to older men.

Although this practice appears to be a strong stereotyping of women, the men regard them as co-equals.

"The woman is more powerful," Ingke admits. He observes that it is the woman who can persuade the man to participate in community meetings.

Manang Vivi says that the woman is an all-round person, except when the job is to construct the Mangyan house.

It is also in their tradition that the woman carries the products and the man, the firewood, she says. But their decisions matter equally, she stresses.

Children

The Mangyan children, including the girls, are taught farm work at a young age.

Because the girls are made to work early and do not have fully developed reproductive systems when they get married, it is common among them to lose children at birth or have difficulty keeping them alive.

"About four out of 10 births survive," says Manang Vivi. The new-borns usually suffer from bronchitis and fever.

"They lack clothing and care, as the mothers look for food everyday," says Manang Vivi.

Family planning

Some midwives would teach family planning to the women, especially the youths.

Observers note that Mangyan women do not experience labor when giving birth as much as non-Mangyan women do because of the daily rigors of physical activities that become part of their exercises.

The ordinary Mangyan couples may not be highly educated, as the non-Mangyan would claim, but they dutifully impart the basics of married life—love, respect and fidelity—to their children.

They may not have said "till death do us part" to one another, but in their hearts, they firmly live up to that commitment.

'Old age can't separate us. Only death can'

By Madonna Virola
Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

LOOK for the Lintawagin couple. Already in their old age, perhaps in the 70s, they can always be seen together, sweetly holding each other's hands like young lovers."

This was the unanimous reply of the Mangyan people, including their non-Mangyan neighbors and friends, in a community at the foot of Mount Halcon, when asked by this writer who would be an ideal couple to feature this Valentine's Day.

Magdalena and Maximo, also called "Mayor" because he had served as a community leader for a long time, later came down from an upland *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) area across the Dulangan River. They inherited the land from their ancestors and have been tilling it for their food and some livelihood.

The couple leaves early in the morning, not later than seven, without breakfast and would be back home at past five in the afternoon. This is their normal day, a constant contact with the earth. They walk barefoot and carry a long, wooden cane.

Magdalena, with a handmade native basket on her back that serves as a container for whatever food items she and her husband could gather, has improvised a head covering from a banana leaf to serve as an umbrella. Her teeth are now reddish from the betel nut she learned to chew from her ancestors.

Maximo's lightheartedness is a good complement to his partner's serious and inhibited stance. He breaks into a crispy laugh as he speaks to almost anybody. If a person can crack jokes, he will not easily get old, he says.

MAXIMO and Magdalena Lintawagin may not know when they started loving each other but they swear they will never forget each other as they live up to the basics of family life—respect and love for each other.

MADONNA VIROLA

Ideal marriage

They do not remember their ages but they will never forget each other. "All I remember is that I was already alive during the Japanese occupation," Maximo said in Filipino.

"He might lose his way home, that's why I always stay with him . . . he's already old," said Magdalena.

The two said it was better now because they had no more children to look after. They have 12 children, five of whom had already died.

"Their life together is ideal although jealousy sometimes creeps in," said Vivencia "Manang Vivi" Tupaz, 43, a niece of Maximo's.

As there is no perfect marriage, she explained that if not out of jealousy, the woman would sometimes call for Maximo's attention.

Despite this, Manang Vivi, a former catechist to her fellow Mangyan, considers the Lintawagins' marriage a good one and typical of the tribe.

"The two seem inseparable. They always go together" was how Alangan Mangyan Roberto Mambo described the Lintawagins.

Theirs is really the model relationship among the Mangyans, especially in their old age, Mambo remarks.

Maximo is perhaps also making up to his wife for time lost when he used to attend to community service, he says. The old man had been active in the Mangyan struggle for their land and culture.

Magdalena's close attention to the family had enabled him to exercise leadership in the community.

Now that a new generation of leaders has taken over, the Lintawagins say they have all the time for each other.

Belonging to the Alangan Mangyan tribe, they may not have career titles for themselves and their children, not even money, a big house and other comforts in life. But no doubt, they, in their barest form, have earned the community's respect and admiration through the years.

Courtship

Like the traditional Mangyan way, Maximo courted the parents of Magdalena by giving them gifts until he won their approval.

He said she was only about 4 years old when he started courting her. That was to ensure that Magdalena would not be taken by any other man, he said.

"My mother forced me, saying she would commit suicide if I would not marry Maximo. After a long while, I came to like him," said Magdalena, who married at 13 (considered the Mangyan marrying age).

Maximo added that he used the *bulung-bulong* (literally means to whisper) as *gayuma*(amulet) to win Magdalena's heart.

"In our marriage life, we have not hurt each other, even answered and shouted at each other," Maximo said, adding that they rarely argue even when they have nothing to eat.

The Lintawagins know that one day, at their old ages, death will separate them, but they firmly believe that their bodies will reunite with the earth.

"Old age cannot separate us. Only death can," Maximo stressed. "If you are already old, you should no longer think of separating."

He fears that a higher spirit would punish them if he does wrong to his family.

Maximo advised the youths, who plan to get married, to do away with vices like smoking and drinking, which some young natives learn from the non-Mangyan.

"And be always happy," he said. Again, he burst into laughter.

Going serious this time, Maximo continued: "While there is the blessing of time, Magdalena and I are simply contented with each other. Finding joy and confidence in each other's love . . . and tirelessly keeping each other's company."

A festival to save a dying coffee industry

By Marlon Ramos
Amadeo, Cavite

A SYMBOLIC marker for the Pahimis Festival will be unveiled as highlight of the unique way that the town of Amadeo in Cavite is addressing the concern of its residents over the dying coffee industry in their province.

The three-day festival, slated on Feb. 14-16, is not just a time for fun and enjoyment. It also aims to raise public awareness about the current situation of coffee farmers and invite prospective investors in their town, said Amadeo Mayor Albert Ambagan.

The municipal council unanimously voted to make Pahimis a yearly event, Ambagan added.

Launched last year, the festival organizers invited several national political figures, including Senators Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Villar and Ramon Magsaysay Jr., and Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, to grace the occasion.

This time, the celebration will feature seminars, symposiums, fun games, a photo contest and workshops for coffee farmers. Leading foreign-owned coffee shops will put up booths.

A search for the "Lakan and Lakambini ng Pahimis" will be held on the last day of the festival.

Speaking before a forum of local coffee farmers on Feb. 8, Ambagan expressed his concern over the adverse impact of uncontrolled importation of coffee to his constituents.

He said certain restrictions should be imposed to importing companies to protect the local coffee farmers.

Amadeo has been one of the hardest-hit areas following the unrestricted entry of cheap coffee from neighboring Asian countries.

"A few years back, coffee beans are being dried all over the streets of Amadeo. We used to have 4,500 hectares of land devoted to coffee. Now, 20 percent of that area has been planted with other crops," Ambagan said.

In 1998, 13,138 hectares of land in Cavite were devoted to coffee. Three years after, the area has declined to around 12,413 hectares of land.

Amadeo produces around 30 percent of coffee in Cavite, which ranks fifth among coffee-producing provinces in the country.

The majority of the town residents rely on coffee farming for their livelihood. However, the farmers own just a small parcel of land, an average of 1.5 hectares, which is much harder to maintain, Ambagan said.

Realizing this, the local government helped put up a cooperative to assist coffee growers in the town in purchasing farm inputs such as fertilizers.

Ambagan also added that the cooperative was helping the farmers sell and enhance the quality of its members' produce.

"We are like the marketing arm of the farmers," he explained.

The mayor stressed the importance of "re-infusing" the youth in coffee farming.

He lamented that the children of coffee farmers, who were able to finish formal education, chose to work in the metropolis than help their parents maintain their farms.

"Coffee farming involves a cultural dimension. We have to educate the youth on the importance of coffee industry to our local economy," Ambagan related.

A farmer leader, Renato Alvarez, belied the contention of some individuals that his group was against the holding of the festival.

"We're never against Pahimis. In fact, the local farmers will be actively participating in the feast despite the fact that the local government didn't invite us in the festival committee," he said.

Bin Laden to Iraqis: Launch suicide attacks

From page A1

The Bin Laden tape heightened fears of a new terror attack in the United States and the Gulf region, where US and British forces are massing for a possible attack on Iraq. The Bush administration has advised Americans to keep tape and plastic sheeting available so they can seal off a "safe room" against lethal radiation, deadly germs or chemical gas. *(See story in The World)*

Advise to Iraqis

On the tape, broadcast on the first day of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha, the speaker advised Iraqis how to fight the Americans, based on al-Qaida's experience in Afghanistan.

"We stress the importance of martyrdom operations against the enemy, these attacks that have scared Americans and Israelis like never before," the man identified as Bin Laden said.

"We advise about the importance of drawing the enemy into long, close and exhausting fighting, taking advantage of camouflaged positions in plains, farms, mountains and cities," he said.

The speaker urged the Iraqis to draw the Americans into urban combat, saying "the thing that the enemy fears the most is to fight a city war."

US military planners fear Saddam might ring Baghdad with his best troops of the elite Republican Guard and draw US forces into bloody street fighting where they could not use their high-tech weapons for fear of causing massive civilian casualties.

The speaker also told Iraqis not to worry about American smart bombs and laser-guided weapons because "they work on only the clear, obvious targets." He encouraged Iraqis to use deception techniques to neutralize American technological superiority.

Some Middle East experts, however, have questioned ties between Bin Laden's Islamic extremists and Saddam's government, which nominally adheres to a Pan-Arabic socialistic doctrine called Baathism.

In the tape, the speaker said socialist "infidels" led Saddam's government. But he said that it was acceptable for Muslims to join with Iraqi socialists because in these circumstances their interests "intersect in fighting against the Crusaders," or Christians.

Powell reaction

"This nexus between terrorists and states that are developing weapons of mass destruction can no longer be looked away from and ignored," Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate budget committee.

Hours before the tape was broadcast, Powell told the Senate committee panel that he had learned of the new statement "where once again (Bin Laden) speaks to the people of Iraq and talks about their struggle and how he is in partnership with Iraq."

US counterterrorism officials in Washington said the audio message was probably a real recording of Bin Laden, and that a technical analysis was planned to authenticate it. The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said it was unclear when the recording was made but added it was probably recent, given all the attention the speaker gave to Iraq.

Yasser Thabet, a broadcast editor at Al-Jazeera, said the station received the tape by the same channels as previous Bin Laden statements, but he did not give details. Bin Laden often used Al-Jazeera to broadcast statements during the Afghanistan war until the elusive terrorist leader vanished after the battle at Tora Bora in December 2001.

OSAMA BIN LADEN: Martyrdom operations against the enemy . . . to scare Americans and Israelis like never before. GETTY IMAGES

In the tape, the speaker also called on Muslims to rise up and "break free from the slavery of these tyrannic and apostate regimes, which are enslaved by America." He singled out Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Nato division

In Brussels, Nato faces a third consecutive day of crisis talks on Wednesday, as the United States backed by 15 allies tries to persuade France, Germany and Belgium to lift their veto on helping Turkey counter the threat of Iraqi missile strikes.

Nato Secretary General Lord Robertson will again attempt to persuade the holdouts to drop their objections and start to patch up the alliance's worst internal dispute in years.

For almost a month, the French, Germans and Belgians have held up the start of planning to send Turkey early warning planes, antimissile batteries and counter-biological and chemical weapons units. The three say starting military preparations now will undermine UN peace efforts.

The division in the alliance threatens US efforts to rally support in the UN Security Council for military action against Iraq. France and Germany, joined by Russia and China, are seeking more time for stronger UN inspections, a proposal opposed by Washington and London.

Nato's dispute intensified Monday when Turkey invoked the alliance's mutual defense treaty to ask for assistance, but was rebuffed by the three. Critics on both sides of the Atlantic said the holdouts had undermined Nato and sent a dangerous message of disunity to the Iraqi leadership.

On Tuesday, the policy setting North Atlantic Council met for just 20 minutes before breaking up. The council agreed only to resume talks on Wednesday morning.

Although there was no clear sign of progress, diplomats said there were signs Germany's resistance may be weakening, but they were unsure whether Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder would break ranks with French President Jacques Chirac or be able to persuade him to come aboard.

Security Council

At the United Nations, France went on the offensive against the United States, unveiling a peace plan for Iraq to counter the expected US push for a UN resolution authorizing military action against Saddam Hussein.

But the United States and Britain dismissed the French plan on Tuesday, saying the key to Iraq's disarmament was Baghdad's full cooperation with inspectors—not tripling the number of inspectors and making inspections more intrusive as the French call for.

Chief UN inspector Hans Blix said tripling the number of inspectors could be useful but he echoed the US and British concerns, saying "it still remains vital that you have . . . good cooperation from the Iraqis on substance."

Blix and top nuclear inspector Mohamed ElBaradei, fresh from weekend talks in Baghdad, will present their latest assessments of Iraq's cooperation—especially in the critical area of providing evidence about its weapons programs—to the Security Council on Friday.

Blix urged two Iraqi commissions searching for banned weapons material and new documents to work very fast and "produce results" before Friday. "That will be helpful," he said.

The inspectors' reports are expected to set the stage for a showdown in the badly divided council focusing on the amount of time inspectors should have to continue their work. The United States and Britain are expected to argue for very little time while France, Russia, China and Germany are expected to push for an extended period. *Reports by AP and Reuters*

Bush calls up GMA, hails stance vs Iraq

From page A1

spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said at his regular press briefing yesterday. An official Malacañang statement said Bush called Ms Macapagal ahead of Angolan President Eduardo Dos Santos and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

In Washington, Agence France Presse quoted White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer as saying that during the phone conversation, Bush also "emphasized the importance of passage by the Philippine legislature of effective new legislation to combat money laundering."

According to Bunye's formulation, Bush "strongly supported" the President's campaign for the passage of amendments to the anti-money laundering law.

"He hoped that President Macapagal's efforts will succeed before Wednesday's deadline for review by the Paris-based international Financial Action Task Force," Bunye said.

Fleischer said Bush "praised President Macapagal's leadership on Iraq and emphasized that the regime in Baghdad must disarm or it will be disarmed by a coalition of the willing."

Ms Macapagal has been the most vocal among Asian leaders in supporting US calls for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to disarm or be stripped of any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons by force.

Bunye said the two leaders "discussed the next steps to US-RP cooperation in the global war against terrorism."

He said Bush expressed "appreciation" for Ms Macapagal's "forthright leadership and contribution to the cause of peace by calling unequivocally on the Baghdad regime to comply with its international legal obligations to disarm."

In turn, Ms Macapagal thanked Bush "for his pledge of further US assistance for the Armed Forces of the Philippines' ongoing campaign against the Abu Sayyaf," Bunye said.

State visit

Bunye declined to comment on the extent of the military aid promised by Bush. He pointed out that the President was scheduled to make a state visit to Washington in April, and that military assistance would be one of the points of discussion with her American counterpart.

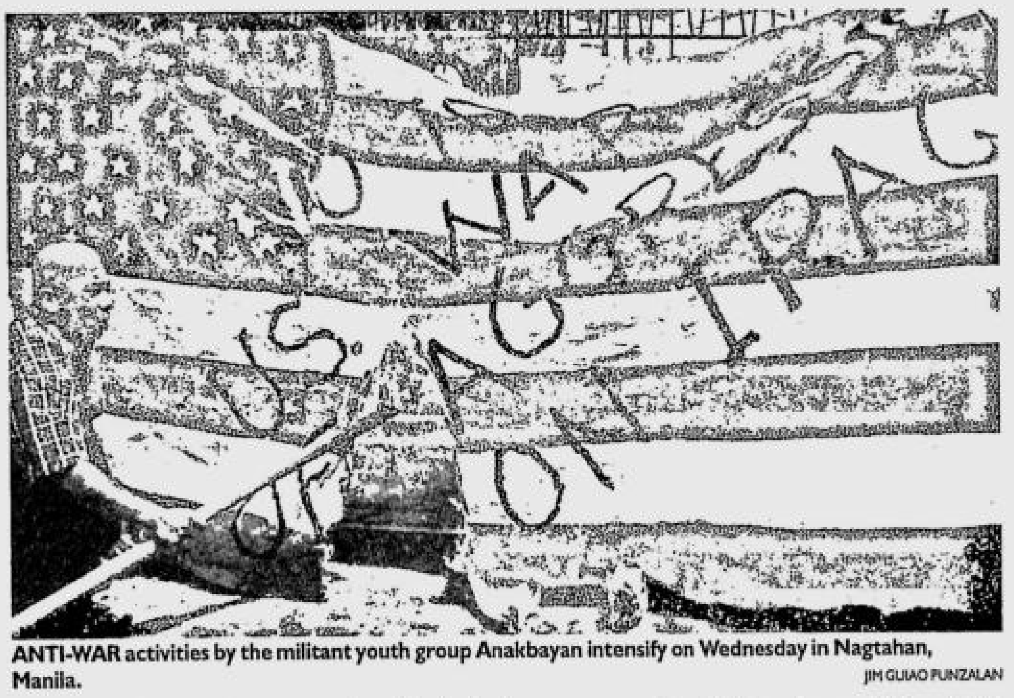
"It will be premature for us to make an announcement. Let's just wait for the actual meeting," Bunye said.

He also said the two Presidents "looked forward" to Ms Macapagal's state visit.

"They hope to discuss how the US can support [her] campaign to further build her legacy of economic and good-government reforms, consistent with President Bush's Millennium Challenge Initiative," he said.

Bunye said Bush likewise "expressed concern for the direct terrorist links of the Iraqi Embassy, as publicly reported by [Foreign] Secretary Blas Ople," and "pledged his support for whatever steps the government might take to protect Filipinos and resident Americans from such reported threats."

THE PRESIDENT is pleased to meet with the Philippine-Medical Mission of Metropolitan Washington D.C. at the Palace on Wednesday. EDWIN BACASMAS



ANTI-WAR activities by the militant youth group Anakbayan intensify on Wednesday in Nagtahan, Manila. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

He said Ms Macapagal also expressed the Philippines' condolences on the United States' recent loss of the space shuttle Columbia and its 7-person crew.

Kuala Lumpur

Before she sets off for Washington, the President will participate in the Non-Aligned Movement summit to be held in Kuala Lumpur late this month.

Malacañang has announced Ms Macapagal's first-time attendance at the gathering of the NAM, which is composed mostly of developing nations that are not militarily aligned with the United States.

As she always does, the President is expected to again stand out at that world gathering. But perhaps not in the way she wants to, because the summit is expected to elicit condemnations from NAM member-nations of the US threat to wage war on Iraq for allegedly developing weapons of mass destruction.

At the press briefing, Bunye took exception to a reporter's question that Ms Macapagal might be out of place in such a gathering because of her stance on Iraq. "I think we have to rephrase the question because the premise concludes that we are fully in support of whatever position is taken by [the United States]," he said.

He insisted that the Philippines was for the peaceful resolution of the US-Iraq conflict and would abide by the resolution of the United Nations Security Council on the matter.

Last week the President said she was convinced by the evidence presented by US Secretary of State Colin Powell about Iraq's purported hidden nuclear arsenal as well as its links to terrorists.

Earlier, she echoed Bush's war talk and called on the UN to act "with dispatch and force" should Iraq fail to fully cooperate with UN weapons inspectors. *With reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan; AFP*

Singapore: Where love is gone

From page A1

coincide with Valentine's Day celebrations. It features dances, concerts, drive-in movies and other activities aimed at putting people "in the right mood for love."

In the tightly regulated city-state known for its "social engineering" programs, romance is but one of the aspects of daily life in which the government feels an obligation to show people how to do things.

Sex guru

Dr. Wei Siang Yu, a self-styled "sex guru" who provides fertility advice to childless couples, said Singaporeans were finding it difficult to show their inner feelings because of the highly competitive society and high population density.

"You're not supposed to be soft. Everything is supposed to be regimented," he told Agence France presse. "Family ties are very strong and most young people move out only when they get married. So how am I going to have sex? How am I going to bring a girl home?"

The government has been playing matchmaker since 1984 when growing numbers of single professionals and increasingly smaller family units prompted the establishment of a dating agency called the Social Development Unit (SDU).

The SDU matches Singaporeans with university degrees who have little time—or simply don't know how—to find a romantic partner. Another agency, the Social Development Service (SDS), caters to singles with no tertiary education.

In April 2001, the government launched a program encouraging couples to have two or more children by offering a "baby bonus" package of financial and educational incentives.

Low fertility

Despite these initiatives, the fertility level has fallen below the rate needed for the natural replacement of the population, making Singapore increasingly dependent on foreign labor and raising the specter of a "graying" population and higher social welfare costs.

The number of births in Singapore fell to a 14-year low of 40,800 in 2002. Couples blamed the prolonged economic slump in the city-state, including a severe recession in 2001, for the slide.

Singles in Singapore, however, are not relying on the government alone. They sign up with online dating websites like www.singaporecupid.com.

Sharmila Su, a 24-year-old businesswoman, received nearly 5,000 hits on her webpage of biographical data after five months with SingaporeCupid.

She finally withdrew after being stalked by three men after she was featured in a local paper as part of a growing trend of singles going online to meet partners.

Dating guide

Singles, who prefer the conventional face-to-face dates on the other hand, have an eight-page dating guide titled, "When Boy Meets Girl! The Chemistry Guide," which was produced by the SDU last year.

"Smiling is a great way to break the ice but don't grin like a Cheshire cat the whole time," it says.

"A date is very similar to a job interview. You have to sell yourself," it continues. "People are drawn to good listeners. But don't just sit there passively, engage whomever you are with," it says.

Premier Club

To put these guides into practice, singles attend activities planned by Premier Club, which has been organizing dining, travelling and exercise sessions for the SDU's 20,000 members since April 2001.

The club organized a pre-Valentine's Day lunch at a defunct lighthouse transformed into a restaurant.

Participants were served stylish but simple dishes so as not to distract them from their dates, an article in the club's quarterly magazine said.

The club has also put together events, like "speed dating" and "blind dates," which provide singles with the opportunity to meet new people who share their predicament.

In speed dating, couples have seven minutes to get to know each other before they move on to the next person. So far Premier has held 130 sessions and about three out of four singles leave with at least one match every meeting.

A participant in her early 30s dated three men she met through the game and gave it the thumbs up for eliminating the usual preliminaries.

"Some of these first impressions that I had were quite accurate," she said.

She has also participated in "Zodiac Dates" in which singles with compatible horoscopes interact over tea. She joined a group trip to Malaysia, but she is still looking out for a permanent partner.

"I haven't found Mr. Right yet," she admitted. *AFP*

GMA: Resume attacks

From page A1

near the Liguasan Marsh—by saying that it was prompted by the refusal of MILF leaders to attend the ceasefire committee meeting set at noon yesterday. *(See story on Page A1.)*

He also said this was what the "silent majority" wanted.

"We must emphasize that we are running after these lawless elements because this is what the people of Mindanao want. The people of Mindanao are tired of conflict, they are tired of terrorist actions perpetrated by these lawless elements," Reyes said, adding:

"There is a lot of noise against this offensive, but the silent majority of the Christians and Muslims in Mindanao, to include the lumad, want to have this thing done and over with."

The hostilities have displaced at least 25,000 persons, Reyes said. At least three children have died in the evacuation centers.

Armed Forces spokesperson Col. Essel Soriano said the death toll stood at three soldiers and 16 MILF and kidnap gang members as of noon yesterday. He said the number of the wounded had risen to 15 soldiers and 18 rebels and gang members.

But Abaya said the skirmishes in at least 10 villages here and its nearby town, Pagalungan in Maguindanao, had resulted in the death of 60 MILF rebels and three soldiers. At least 15 soldiers were wounded, he added.

On the other hand, Kabalu said MILF rebels were holding on and had killed at least 49 soldiers from the 39th Infantry Battalion alone since Tuesday morning.

He said three of their guerrillas were killed and three others wounded as the fighting continued.

"Based on military reports coursed through their radio system, which we intercepted, we also learned that 36 soldiers have been wounded in Barangay Bolol alone," Kabalu said.

Abaya said the MILF was losing the battle and that "the scoreboard can tell."

The fighting that started Tuesday has forced the evacuation of at least 25,000 persons now housed in makeshift shelters here.

The offensive was suspended in deference to the observation of the end of the pilgrimage in Mecca, a Muslim holiday.

But that holiday ended last night and the fighting resumed, Abaya said, adding that before noon yesterday government troops were still pounding the rebels.

Earlier, Kabalu assailed the AFP for mounting the offensive during the Muslim holiday. He said this showed the military's total disrespect to the Muslims.

Continuing attack

Abaya admitted that despite the President's order to stop military operations, fighting continued in the field. He blamed this on the MILF, saying it kept on attacking government forces.

He said the military would continue attacking the MILF rebels and their allies until it had taken control of the situation.

Asked what would stop the offensive, Abaya said: "The MILF should stop harboring criminals and help the government bring these criminals to the court of justice.

"We are running after the criminals—the Pentagon gang members and the bombers who happen to have sought refuge in MILF areas. So if the MILF has nothing to do with these groups—of which they keep on harping—maybe with their kind of force they can help us."

In Manila, AFP spokesperson Soriano said "the tension will be there for as long as the pounding of the OV10s and artillery fire [continues] in the area."

Asked why the fighting had continued despite the President's order, he said the ceasefire was like a car on "rolling stop," meaning that the soldiers would observe the ceasefire but stay in their defensive positions.

Abaya said the military was in Pikit not because of the MILF but because of the criminals that the group was harboring, supposedly including the suspects in the December bombing in Maguindanao that killed Ampatuan Mayor Saudi Ampatuan.

"We are not after the MILF because we are aware that there are peace negotiations," he said. "But that does not hamper us from doing security actions. If [the suspects] are members of the MILF, that's incidental."

Abaya said the operation could end shortly, in "two or three days."

Darkness

The whole of Maguindanao and some parts of North Cotabato, including Pikit, were plunged into darkness the other night after two steel transmission towers near Pagagawan town were toppled.

The military blamed the MILF for the simultaneous toppling of at least two power lines of the state-owned National Power Corp. in Nuling, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, and in Bulit, Kabacan, North Cotabato.

A third power line was spared after an improvised bomb failed to explode, according to Abaya.

"Who else would do such things aside from the MILF? I do not think our soldiers would topple power lines," he said.

In Cotabato City, Lanang Ali, MILF legal counsel and head of the Coordinated Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, said the MILF leadership wanted the "problem on the ground" solved first before a discussion on a ceasefire could be held.

"It would be a useless meeting ... while troops on the ground continue to shoot at each other," Ali said.

But he immediately added that the MILF was not yet backing out of the peace process.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, chair of the government peace panel, vowed to persuade the MILF peace panel to reconsider its stand "for the sake of the thousands of evacuees."

"We need to talk and issue a united call for an immediate cessation of hostilities," he said.

3 Dead children

Defense Secretary Reyes said the number of evacuees stood at 25,000, of whom 15,000 were staying with relatives and 10,000 were housed in centers.

But Agence France Presse quoted relief official Joel Maglunob as saying that the number of displaced civilians had reached about 31,000.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman yesterday confirmed the death of three children in evacuation centers in Pikit.

"One died last night, and two kids this morning. Their ages ranged from two years to six years," she said.

She added that the children, who died of measles, were buried yesterday in accordance with Muslim custom.

Soliman said congestion and poor sanitation might have aggravated the children's poor health.

"The centers are too congested," she said, and raised the need to establish a "tent city" of sorts in addition to the 12 evacuation centers.

The centers include two National Food Authority warehouses, a gymnasium and schools.

Yesterday, relief workers distributed mats, used clothing and about 1,500 sacks of rice to the evacuees.

Soliman said she expected the fighting to last for 10 more days. She said she was not sure whether their resources would last that long.

"I'm appealing to everybody to help us," she said. "We need as much as we can, in cash or in kind—food, old clothing, medicines, especially toys for children, so that they can play inside the shelter."

The evacuees feel fear, anxiety and self-pity.

Sandulla Noh, father of seven children, said no one had been attending his farm since Saturday, the day they left Barangay Nalapaan.

The barangay was earlier declared a "Space for Peace," which means armed groups are not allowed to enter the village.

Noh was one of the thousands of residents forced to leave their homes during then President Joseph Estrada's "all-out war" in 2000.

He had one question for Fr. Roberto Layson, OMI, the priest who has been in the forefront of efforts to rebuild the lives of the evacuees: "When will this end?" *With reports from Charlie C. Señase, Allan A. Nawal, Rosa May V. de Guzman and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov't to pursue peace talks with MILF

From page A1

sand suspected bandits hiding in a supposed MILF camp.

"As of 2 p.m. today I have ordered the Armed Forces to capture and occupy the Buliok complex fronting the Liguasan Marsh in Central Mindanao," she said in a statement read by Bunye at about the same time.

She described the Buliok complex as a "base of operations and refuge area" of the Pentagon kidnap gang and other heavily armed gangs in Mindanao.

In an apparent effort to save the peace process, the President said the military assault was "not directed against the [MILF]."

"However," she warned, "our troops will defend themselves against any force blocking their mission to eliminate criminal gangs in Mindanao."

Ms Macapagal ordered the resumption of military operations after an emergency meeting with security advisers in Malacañang at 9-11 a.m.

At the meeting were Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and the President's advisers Eduardo Ermita, Norberto Gonzales and Paul Dominguez, chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao and Bunye.

The President was in touch with field commanders during the meeting.

Her assistant and chief negotiator Jesus Dureza later called from Cotabato City to say that the MILF ceasefire panel did not show up for the meeting set at noon.

"Why should we attend when the military is continuing to shell us?" MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told Reuters by phone. "It only shows that the President has no control of the military."

Go-signal

Bunye told reporters that based on Dureza's report "and the situation obtaining in the field," the President gave the go-signal for the military to resume operations.

He said the ceasefire actually ended Tuesday midnight.

Dureza, however, did not mention such a deadline when he briefed reporters the other day. He said Reyes phoned him at around 1:30 p.m. Tuesday asking him to relay the President's ceasefire order to his MILF contacts.

Ms Macapagal ordered the ceasefire supposedly in deference to the Muslim holiday Eid'l Adha.

Bunye waved aside questions that the ceasefire order could have cost the military a strategic loss.

"Maybe we should not go that far," he said. "Things have already happened. And another order has been given by the President."

He also said the other side did not observe the ceasefire, anyway: "During the night there was at least one attack by the other side, to which our troops responded."

At the aborted meeting of the ceasefire committee, Dureza was to have taken his counterparts to task for violating the joint communique of May 6, 2002, wherein the MILF agreed not to harbor suspected criminals being pursued by the military.

Bunye cited a report that one of the Pentagon gang leaders was at the MILF camp even prior to the clashes in the towns of President Roxas and Columbiano.

"These bandit groups fled to this area, which is supposed to be an MILF territory," he said, referring to Rajah Muda in the Liguasan Marsh.

But despite the violation, the joint communique is still in effect, Bunye said.

Cooperation

With the Muslim world celebrating the end of the Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca), Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong called on Moro rebels to "fully cooperate" with the government so that lasting peace could be realized in the war-torn areas of Mindanao.

Datumanong, the first Moro to be named justice secretary, went as far as to say that the MILF separatists should consider laying down their arms to allow the country to achieve "national unity."

"The God of the Muslims is the same God ... of the Christians and all the people in the world," he said, adding:

"I think the most important thing for us Filipinos to do is to help this country recover from economic [stagnation], so that we can live a better life. It will not only be for the administration but for all Filipinos." *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac; Reuters*

EVACUEE hangs on to his personal belonging at the Mahad Markasi Al Islamik in Pikit, North Cotabato.

VAL HANDUMON

GMA tries to bridge . . .

From page A1

ident Robin Sy, who has been scorned by Malacañang for supporting known Estrada allies specifically Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, in their election bids.

A source from the Ng camp told the INQUIRER that the President had thrown her support behind Ng, even if he's a former Estrada adviser for the iron and steel industry, because of his pledge to aggressively pursue the FFCCCI's Barrio School Project and the Buy Pinoy Campaign.

The project is the biggest private sector initiative in the school building program.

The INQUIRER source said Ng went out of his way to ask members and the rest of the Chinese-Filipino community to support the program by foregoing their lavish weddings or birthday celebrations and just spend the money on building schools in the barrios.

Politely agreed but...

While Tan had politely agreed to support Ng in support of the President's call for unity, Tan was unlikely to actively campaign for Ng among FFCCCI members, a source from the beer and tobacco magnate's group claimed. The Tan source said that if the President really wanted Ng to win, she herself should lobby for the steel magnate among the FFCCCI members.

Barrio schools project

FFCCCI has built a total of 2,800 barrio schools since it launched the school building program in 1960 but over 40 percent of these schools were put up only in the last three years.

During his term as president from 1999 to 2001, Tan led the construction of 450 school buildings nationwide. This was eclipsed by Tan's successors Benjamin Chua and Ng (who took over the presidency after the former, Ng's friend and business partner passed away in May 2002)—who have so far built a total of 770 barrio schools, including 300 schools funded from the P100-million country development fund of Sen. Franklin Drilon.

Drilon's pork

Drilon had agreed to channel his pork barrel fund to FFCCCI's Barrio School Program because the business group was able to build the standard 2-room school at only P300,000 each or less than half the government contractor's budget and within the committed timetable.

FFCCCI is able to build schools cheaper and on time because its members and affiliates (specifically the hardware store suppliers and contractors) in the project site agree to provide the supplies and manpower at cost.

A source from the Ng group said Ng was largely responsible for increasing the funding of the barrio school project which was previously bankrolled by officers of FFCCCI.

But the construction of virtually one barrio school a day since 2001 has not impressed a number of FFCCCI members who criticized Ng for being more of a politician than a businessman.

A source from the Sy group said that a growing number of FFCCCI members was grumbling that they were made to pay for Ng's propensity to make "big promises."

The same source said that while the FFCCCI members supported the barrio school program, sluggish business and gloomy prospects for the economy had made it increasingly difficult to fund Ng's "expensive promises."

FFCCCI members close to Sy have also questioned Ng's eligibility to seek another term because their by-laws have a single-term limit.

A source from Ng's camp said that his critics were mostly old-guard members that were resisting Ng's vision to make FFCCCI an active player in nation-building and not just in protecting its members' business interests.

SSS increases rates by 12% starting March

From page A1

will remain at 3.3 percent but that of employers will be raised to 6.07 percent from the present 5.07 percent.

Fund imbalance

"SSS sought the increase to correct its yearly fund imbalance caused by the contribution rates being outpaced by growing benefit payments. Benefit payments have exceeded contributions since 1993," De la Paz noted. Without the increase in contributions, SSS funds would be depleted in the next 7 to 10 years.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) said it would support the SSS rate hike.

Ecop president Donald Dee, who is also a commissioner of the SSS, claimed that the one-percentage point hike in contributions was proposed by the employers group.

"We have been working closely with labor groups and last year, they agreed that they would not seek a wage hike provided employers would help them, and secure their employment," said Dee.

The Ecop president said he proposed to labor groups that instead of a wage hike, employers would agree to shoulder the increase in their SSS contributions.

"This strategy would help both the SSS and labor. Through the SSS, we could ease their financial burden and by helping SSS, we secure the future of their pension," said Dee.

Dee said that on an average daily wage of P300, employers remit to the SSS P16.20 per day for every worker at the present rate of 8.4 percent.

At the 9.4 percent rate, employers would pay the SSS P3 more or P19.20 per day for every worker.

Dee said the increase to 9.4 percent would correct the difference between benefits and contributions. "In fact, I think it would be slightly in favor of contributions already," he added.

In the plan submitted by the SSS to Malacañang last year, it proposed to increase contributions by 1.2 to 1.4 percentage points in the next five years and eventually bring the rate to 15 percent.

The rate collected by the Government Service Insurance System from its members is 21 percent. The GSIS provides benefits to 1.5 million government workers.

Lowest in Asia

The SSS has one of the lowest monthly contribution rates among pension funds in Asia and much lower than the GSIS. Malaysians pay 23 percent monthly for their pension; the Chinese, 30 percent, and Singaporeans, 32 percent.

Dee, however, said that after this round of contribution increase, the SSS may not have to raise rates again if it could look for ways of further improving its finances.

At the current rate of 8.4 percent, the actuarial life of the SSS is in danger of being fully depleted by 2012 or three years earlier than the forecast made by actuaries.

In 1990, the fund's life was projected to remain healthy "forever." But in 1995, the fund's life was estimated to last until 2050. By 1999, the SSS said its funds would be depleted by 2015.

De la Paz said the SSS had been dipping into its investment income to finance some of the benefits, a practice not considered prudent.

The SSS fund has dwindled as every administration starting with the Marcos regime had ordered an average increase of 13.4 percent in the benefits of members in the past 19 years until 2000.

On the other hand, the rate of contribution had not increased in the last 22 years.

Starting 1997, the growth of the fund's contributions was way below expectations although investment income had mostly met the actuarial projections.

By 1999, the members' contributions of P27.1 billion was lower than the cost of benefits that reached P28.8 billion.

In 2000, the SSS paid its members P33.9 billion in benefits but received only P30.3 billion in contributions, resulting in a gap of P3.6 billion. A year later, the gap widened to P7.6 billion as contributions of P39 billion outpaced benefits of P31.4 billion.

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Sorenstam nears PGA stint

FORT WORTH, Texas— Sweden's Annika Sorenstam is negotiating with organizers of the Colonial to become the first woman in 58 years to play in a PGA Tour event. Dee Finely, tournament director, said talks are ongoing with Sorenstam's agent to give last year's top LPGA money winner one of 12 sponsor's exemptions for the May 22-25 event here. *AFP*

FIRST GENT'S CIRCUIT

Casas 2 up on Cuello at Orchard

By Jong Arcano

AN even-par 72 hardly gave justice to another display of solid shotmaking by Cassius Casas yesterday as a sudden downpour made the greens hard to read in the second round of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit.

Hitting 17 greens, Casas made 16 pars and a birdie against a bogey in wet and windy conditions in the series presented by San Miguel Beer at the Palmer course of the Orchard Golf and Country Club.

Rodrigo Cuello shot a 71 to stay two shots behind in this 11th leg of the Tour funded by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's foundation and San Miguel Beer.

Edwin Estrera and Rey Pagunsan shared third at 143.

Estrera fired a 66 on five birdies on the last six holes, falling one stroke shy of tying the course record 65 established by Michael Campbell of New Zealand in the memorable 1995 Johnnie Walker Classic.

After breaking the winners' circle last week by beating Casas for the Tagaytay Midlands leg, the late-starting Pagunsan moved into striking position again by exploiting the better conditions in the afternoon to score a 67.

Japanese Tomo Yoshinago also bolstered his bid to become the first foreigner to win in the circuit organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc. with his second straight 72 to join Robert Pactolerin and Eddie Bagtas at 144.

Stealing the limelight was Rudy Enema who score a hole-in-one on the 12th to win P10,000 and a P5,000-gift certificate from Orchard.

He finished with a 73 and was tied for 16th with rookie pro Angelo Que (76) at 148.

"Biglang umulan kaya mahirap basahin ang greens, tapos lumakas ang hangin. Sayang maganda pa naman ang diskarte sa bakal, maraming palo ang dikit sa bandera," said Casas, who had posted one win and three runner-up finishes in the last four weeks.

Casas will be playing in the final flight for the fifth straight week.

Today's round should see the top guns of the Tour taking bolder moves with the Top 20 players in the standings separated by just eight strokes or less.

Benjie Magada, a two-leg winner, barely survived the cut with his 79=155, making him the 40th and last qualifier.

The scores:

140 - C. Casas 68-72
142 - R. Cuello 71-71
143 - E. Estrera 77-66, R. Pagunsan 76-67
144 - R. Pactolerin 73-71, E. Bagtas 72-72, T. Yoshinago (Jpn)
145 - E. Salvador 73-72, D. Zarate 71-74, C. LaO 70-75
146 - R. Brobio 74-72, R. Sinfuego 71-75
147 - M. Pucay 73-74, P. Minoza 73-74, W. de Tomas 72-75

CASAS: Survives wet and windy conditions. PDI PHOTO

Woods is back, joins Buick

By Greg Heakes
AFP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO, California—Tiger Woods will end the longest layoff of his career here on Thursday (Friday in Manila) when he makes his 2003 PGA Tour debut at the $4.5-million Buick Invitational.

The 27-year-old American will be under close scrutiny this week after skipping the first five tournaments of the season following knee surgery.

Woods tested his surgically repaired left knee on Tuesday, playing an early morning practice round in heavy rain and fog.

The bad weather, which cut practice rounds short for many golfers, is expected to continue over the next few days.

Woods looked strong in hitting the fairways but because of water-logged greens he didn't have any putting practice Tuesday.

Defending champion Jose Maria Olazabal of Spain says tour veterans like himself will be ready for Woods' return.

"Look at what Tiger has done the last few years here, all the tournaments he has won," Olazabal said. "At the same time it will be interesting this year. You have other players in the picture like Ernie Els and Davis Love.

"I think the task will be more difficult for Tiger than it has been the last few years." Olazabal will also be trying to sustain a hot streak by international players. Non-US golfers have won six of the last seven PGA events dating to the final two events of 2002.

It won't be easy, especially with the return of Woods, who skipped the first five events of the year following knee surgery in December. *AFP*

Miñoza heads cast of Razon golf

A star-studded cast of 40 professionals, headed by no less than the Philippines' No. 1 Frankie Miñoza, has been invited to play in the first Don Pocholo Razon Memorial Invitational golf tournament.

Joining Miñoza in the elite cast set for Feb. 25-28 at The Country Club is Canada's Rick Gibson, the former Philippine Open champion.

The 39th and 40th slots have been reserved for the winners of the First Gentleman Circuit legs at the Orchard and Manila Southwoods.

The 40 will form part of the field for the pro-am event on Feb. 25. The pros will continue to play, with the top 21 making it to the last two rounds.

Ricky Razon Jr., president of the International Container Services, Inc., is launching the 72-hole tournament "to honor the memory of my father and celebrate his love for golf."

Don Pocholo founded ICTSI in 1987 and turned it into the biggest ports management company in the country.

GOLDEN TEE
Ricky Razon Jr. hits the ceremonial ball on Tuesday kicking off the Golden Tee Golf Tournament at the Manila Golf Club. Watching are (from left) Delfin Lazaro, Octavio V. Espiritu, Nono Ibazeta and Rod Feliciano. ROGER MARGALLO

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - LA Lakers vs Denver, 7 p.m., IBC 13
GOLF: The Golf Club 2003, 8 p.m., Star Sports
POOL: Mosconi Cup 2002, 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. (r), ESPN
Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. (r), Star Sports
SOCCER: EPL, 7 a.m., ESPN
Spanish Football League, 11 a.m. (r), Star Sports
Futbol Mundial, 7:30 p.m., Star Sports
BOWLING: Aviva Asian Bowling Tour, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (r), ESPN

PFF to pick 15 young booters for RP squad

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY-The Philippine Football Federation (PFF) will pick 10 to 15 players from the ongoing six-team under-16 Coke Go for Goal national finals here to be drafted to the Philippine national pool.

Rene Adad, PFF president, said those chosen will be added to the 15 national players now undergoing rigid training for the Asian Under-16 Football Cup in December.

Adad said the venue of the tournament has yet to be decided.

Despite the dismal performance of the national football team in international competitions, Adad said the PFF will continue to send contingent to similar tournaments as part of the player's exposure and training.

Besides, he added, PFF membership in the International Football Federation might be prejudiced if the PFF will not participate.

He said the country's football team did not perform well in international competition in the last 30 years due to lack of strong and "solid foundation."

But with the program initiated by PFF in the late '90s, Abad said, it will not be long for the country to have a stronger team.

Agassi ousts Chang in straight sets

SAN JOSE, California—Giving his boyhood rival a further push towards retirement, top seed Andre Agassi outclassed Michael Chang, 6-4, 6-2, in the first round of the $380,000 San Jose Open on Tuesday.

"Michael is not only one of the greatest competitors tennis has ever seen, but also one of the greatest competitors sport has ever seen," Agassi, 32, told reporters.

"He lays his heart on the line every time he comes on court.

He's been an inspiration to me." Chang, 30, who recently announced that he would retire after the 2003 US Open, put up a valiant struggle against the Australian Open champion but had little answer to Agassi's thunderous attack from inside the baseline.

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Script altered; Bec wants us at Cafe Emmanuel

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

DID you see the NBA All-Star game on Monday? I bet you did.

I watched the NBA All-Star game myself. But I didn't see one. What I saw was a Jordan Show. Or what initially appeared as one.

To be sure, this NBA All-Star game, the NBA's fifty-second, was designed for Jordan. For dramatic purposes, of course.

First, they named Jordan a reserve -- as if he was not a certified star all these years. Next, Allen Iverson and Tracy McGrady both offered their starting slots to Jordan. Then, we saw a clamor for Vince Carter to also give up his berth in favor of Jordan. Carter refused. But in a move that added drama to it, Carter gave way to Jordan moments before the start of the game.

Who said the NBA is incapable of creating melodrama?

From the very start, the Jordan Show was scripted.

Teammates unselfishly gave Jordan all the room to dish out his wares.

Cameramen did not need to be reminded of their cues to focus the spotlight on His Airness most of the time, if not all of the time.

Coach Isaiah Thomas allotted more than Jordan's share of playing time.

The fans cheered almost each time Jordan had the ball, whether dribbling it, passing it or shooting it.

Everything was going on smoothly. A happy ending was in the works right after Jordan fired the one familiar shot that has made him the game's best performer ever. When it hit its mark, the crowd went crazy. Jordan's side jumper gave East a 2-point lead. The Jordan Show was seconds away from a victorious "The End."

And then...and then.

The bad boys altered the script. In a wink of an eye, everything turned from glory to gory. Not only to the pro-Jordan crowd but to all of basketball-landia.

Even the show's director didn't know what hit him. After Jordan made the shot of the night, the director forgot the single word that defines his very existence: Cut!

Suddenly, this wasn't "Like Mike" anymore but "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly."

The Good was Jermaine O'Neal, who acted his role to the hilt when he tried to foil a three-point shot by The Bad who was none other than Kobe Bryant. The Ugly was Ted Bernhardt the referee, who slapped O'Neal the foulest of fouls with one second left. When Kobe made two of his three free throws to send the game into overtime, that wrote finis to the Jordan Show. The script got so mangled in the extension the fans went home with pained hearts after the game.

"Things happen," said Jordan after his East team lost to the West after two overtimes.

He was right. It happened again: Every show seemed destined to produce a spoiler.

■

Bec Yao is calling on her closest friends to join her and her hubby, Bun, to a Valentine's Party of dance, wine and song tomorrow evening at the Cafe Emmanuel along Kalayaan Ave., Quezon City (tel. 929-9163).

"I know the economy is not that good and people do not go out to spend more money than they should nowadays," said Bec. "But a P200 minimum charge is not so much to ask of people who consider love as the greatest equalizer on planet Earth. With love, every hardship can be conquered. Let's dance and enjoy the music at Cafe Emmanuel, my kind of music, your kind of music."

Like Bec and Bun, Sol's music and mine is also the Sixties'. It goes "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!"

Philta-Mizuno champ snares Thailand berth

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A CHANCE to compete in the tough Thailand Open awaits the winner of the Philippine Tennis Association Mizuno-Westin Philippine Plaza Tennis Grand Prix, which will pit the country's best netters on Feb. 20-23 at the Westin Astro Turf grasscourts.

Philta chair Pablo Olivarez announced this yesterday even as he started the association's renewed drive to improve Philippine tennis by providing them plenty of exposures.

``What incentive can we give our national players but a chance to compete with the best in the region," said the former Parañaque mayor, who has been working hand in hand with Philta president Buddy Andrada to pump in new blood into the sport.

Andrada lauded the formation of the grand prix, which will give the local netters additional tournament aside from the proposed local Grand Slam events that include the Philta Open, Metro Open and National Open slated within the year.

``These will serve as a search for the next generation of national players," said Andrada, who has forged partnership with Mizuno managing director Lovell Gopez and Westin general manager Shane Cunning.

``With an opportunity to compete abroad as a top prize, we are assured they will move heaven and earth to win," added Olivarez.

Reigning PCA Open champ Joseph Victorino will clash with the likes of Johnny Arcilla, who just won the Tubod Open in Lanao del Norte, and Davis Cup mainstays Adelo Abadia and Michael Mora III in the event supported by Mizuno Sports and Westin Philippine Plaza.

Tournament director Rene Selmar said registration is on going at the Philta offices and at the Westin Astroturf courts. Deadline for registration is 8 a.m. of Feb. 20.

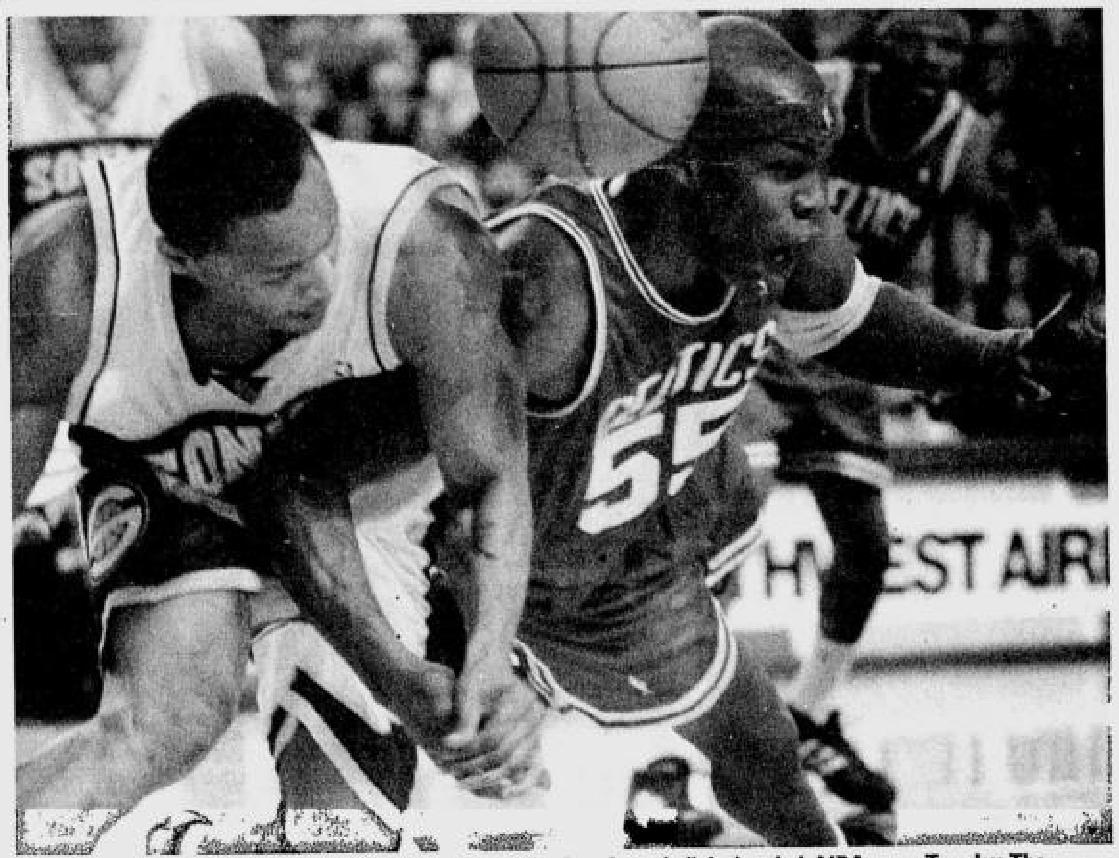
Lakers, Nets on Solar Sports

The Los Angeles Lakers and the New Jersey Nets, the two teams that met in the 2002 NBA Finals, headline today's (Thursday, February 13) TV doubleheader from Solar Sports. The Lakers face the Denver Nuggets at 7:30 p.m. on IBC-13, while the Nets tackle the Memphis Grizzlies at 10 p.m. on Solar Sports ("live" telecast is 9 a.m.).

The Lakers and their terrific twosome of Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant are just two victories out of the eighth spot in the Western Conference and a return visit to the NBA Playoffs in April.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1993, Pompoyo Vasquez shot a 75 to capture by a stroke the Philippine Seniors Golf Championship at the Fort. Bonifacio course.



SEATTLE'S Rashard Lewis and Boston's Eric Williams dive for a loose ball during their NBA game Tuesday. The Celtics won, 82-76.

AP

Lakers rout Nuggets; Pacers trounce Cavs

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant made it six consecutive games of 35 points or more by scoring 42 despite sitting out the fourth quarter as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Denver Nuggets, 121-93, and extended their winning streak to a season-high six.

Bryant has scored 243 points (40.5 average) during the streak. He played 31 minutes against the Nuggets, shooting 12-of-20 and making 17 of 21 free throws. The totals could have been higher, but with the Lakers leading 100-66 after three quarters, he wasn't needed after that.

Shaquille O'Neal added 20 points, eight rebounds and five assists, while Samaki Walker had 14 points as the Lakers (25-23) moved a season-high two games over .500. O'Neal also sat out the fourth quarter.

Jermaine O'Neal scored 28 points and Brad Miller had 25 Tuesday as the Indiana Pacers opened the second half of the season with Ron Artest back in the lineup and coach Isiah Thomas on the sidelines in a 107-96 victory over Cleveland.

Artest completed a four-game suspension and Thomas had served a two-game suspension. Even during the All-Star break, the pair were making news.

Thomas, who coached the East, angered Cleveland's Zydrunas Ilgauskas by playing him only four minutes during Sunday's All-Star game. *AP*

Kemp sacked for third drug 'cure' violation

ORLANDO—Shawn Kemp of the Orlando Magic was suspended without pay Tuesday for his third violation of the NBA's drug program.

The Orlando center's suspension starts with Tuesday's game against the New Jersey Nets and continues until he is in full compliance with his treatment program, the NBA announced.

Kemp took part in the Magic's shootaround Tuesday but was informed by team officials later in the day that he had been suspended.

NBA rules forbid the team or players from discussing information regarding any player being treated in the program, other than to announce he is suspended or dismissed from the league.

Kemp, 33, is a six times NBA All-Star but he has been plagued by substance abuse problems in recent years.

Last season, while with the Portland Trail Blazers, he was suspended for five games for violating the policy.

The 6-foot-10 Kemp also missed the final eight games of the 2000-01 season when he took leave of absence from Portland to enter a substance abuse program. He was not suspended then because he voluntarily entered the program.

Kemp is averaging 7.9 points and 6.4 rebounds in 42 games this season, playing an average of 23.1 minutes per game. *Reuters*

Riley fined $20,000

NEW YORK—Miami Heat coach Pat Riley was fined $20,000 by the NBA Tuesday for publicly criticizing game officials.

Riley made his comments after the Heat lost 101-87 to the Portland Trail Blazers last Wednesday. He accused the referees of smiling and laughing with the Blazers players and acting in an unprofessional manner. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS

Orlando 92, New Jersey 83; Golden State 116, Atlanta 113; New Orleans 78, Miami 69; Indiana 107, Cleveland 96; Minnesota 100, Dallas 98; Detroit 89, Chicago 79;l LA Clippers 107, Phoenix 106; Utah 103, Houston 101 (ot); Boston 82, Seattle 76; Sacramento 99, Washington 80; LA Lakers 121, Denver 93; San Antonio 116, Portland 111 (ot).

Channel 4 gets clearance to air PBA games

By June Navarro

NBN-4 has cleared all the stumbling blocks toward airing the PBA games as the government station secured a favorable opinion from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel.

The judgment of the OGCC virtually cemented NBN's television deal with the PBA, making the signing of the franchise agreement between the PBA and NBN-4 today a mere formality.

NBN general manager Joey Isabelo said the opinion of the OGCC was obtained as early as Tuesday after which the television network furnished a copy to the PBA Board of Governors.

"Anyway you look at it, the television coverage of the PBA is favorable to the government. So it wasn't difficult for the OGCC to render a positive opinion," Isabelo told the INQUIRER.

Isabelo said the signing of the franchise deal would automatically fetch telecast orders from prospective sponsors willing to pour in good money into the PBA.

The payment from the advertisers will help defray the technical and operational costs of the television coverage and service the credit line that Manila Bank has opened.

Manila Bank has recently issued a letter of credit worth P200 million which represents NBN's payment to the PBA for the 2003 season. The LC enables the PBA to withdraw the funds from Manila Bank without hitches.

Meanwhile, some PBA governors offered their reservations on the concept of a parallel broadcast between NBN-4 and IBC-13.

A PBA governor, who requested anonymity, feared that the idea of a parallel broadcast entails costs, which, in the end, would take its toll on the league.

"NBN will pay for the coverage of the games. But what if NBN fails to comply with the financial requirements of a parallel broadcast? NBN's payment to the PBA could be a problem," asked the PBA governor.

Another governor has said that hiring television talents new to the ways and means of covering the games would only do harm than good in the long run.

"It's better to hire the experts and the genuine sportscasters than hire someone new. *Baka mababoy ang coverage*," were his words.

PBA chair Jun Cabalan, however, foresees a positive scenario when the project pushes through.

"Parallel broadcast is basically an improvement from the earlier proposal of NBN. I see positive changes in terms of coverage the moment it takes effect," said Cabalan.

Nationals versus US '5' in exhibition series

THE NATIONAL basketball team will be facing a US selection in a five-game series within the month.

Living up to its commitment to the national endeavor, the Philippine Basketball League has arranged the Filipinos' exhibition series with the Americans to be led by Brando Payton, the 23-year-old younger brother of Seattle Supersonics All-Star guard Gary Payton.

PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad originally planned to form a PBL selection against the US squad but forego the plan in favor of the national players who needed the exposure more.

"As we have reiterated, national interest is our foremost concern and I believe the experience, the lessons and the exposure the RP nationals will gain from this stint will be a big boost to their preparation for three major tournaments this year," said Trinidad.

The series came to form after a series of meetings between PBL Deputy Commissioner Tommy Ong and Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) executive vice president Christian Tan and regional director Johnny Tam.

The visiting US team is composed of talented veterans and collegiate standouts and beefed up by familiar faces in Philippine basketball.

Payton will be accompanied by 6-foot-4 Maurice Brown, 6-3 Alvin Stephenson Jr., 6-0 Gary DiGrazia, 6-5 Nathaniel Gore, 6-8 Will Levy and 6-10 Terrence Super.

Beefing up the team are MBA veterans Chris Mendoza, Kalani Fereria, VJ Santos and actor Carlos Morales, a former San Sebastian Stag who played for the Pangasinan Waves.

From the list, Brown, who played for California State Bakersfield, will be biggest attraction having been the shot block leader of the 2002 San Francisco Pro-Am.

Super is also expected to gain his share of attention with his hefty built and his on-the-road experience with the semi-professional team, Oakland Believers.

Levy, a graduate of Eastern Washington College, is said to be a prolific forward with vast experience playing for Latin-American league teams like Club Frayles in Guasane, Mexico and Club Los Paisas in BCS Labos, Mexico. *Roy Luarca*

LGBA derby championship round tonight

THE FIERCE showdown of provincial derby champions resumes today as the "LGBA Pasabong 7-Cock Derby" championship round gets underway at Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Today's frontrunners, who piled up three victories each last Tuesday, are former congressman Amado Bagatsing of Manila (Air Gladiator), Mike Buendia of Batangas (Buenas Dias), Nestor Alcala of Bulacan (Spider 676 II) and OPMI president Vic Yu (Mandaluyong International 9-Cock).

Trailing closely with two points each are John Reyes Jr. (Liberty Gold Cup II), Bobby del Rosario (Mangzee Farm), R. Tan (Jasmine Dagupan), Noel and Ruel Zulueta (Top of the Line), Anthony Lim (Piwa Lucban), Sandy Javier, LGBA president Boy Diaz and Rep. Lawrence Wacnang (RMR Crowsland Purple Haze II), Vice Gov. Mario Espinosa (Islander I) and B. Diaz/S. Javier (RMR Purple Haze I).

On Feb. 18 and 20 is the "5th UCAP/Anito Firebird 7-Cock Derby" with Palawan's Mauro Prieto and hotelier Biboy Enriquez as hosts.

For details, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 5354-2341 and 534-4110.

Talk N Text, Red Bull lead 6-footers jr league

TALK N Text-National Pool A and Red Bull-Pool B hurdled separate rivals Tuesday to keep their share of the lead in the Bert Lina Six-Foot Junior Basketball Championship at the UST gym.

Coached by Johnny Tam, Pool A drubbed Shell-UCAA, 96-57, while Red Bull of coach Ching Ching Marcelino subdued Sta. Lucia-Cusa, 67-60, for their second straight wins in the tournament confined to players 18 years old and below and over 6-feet tall.

National University standout Jonathan Fernandez, Edwin Osoro amd Brian Ilad towed Pool A to a 48-28 halftime spread from which Shell-UCAA never recovered.

Conor Oreta and Darryl Bautista, on the other hand, knocked in a triple each as Pool B foiled Sta. Lucia's rally, 65-60, with 43 seconds left.

Coca-Cola-Pool C of coach Ato Badolato whipped Ginebra-NCRAA, 87-70, to level its slate at 1-1. *Roy Luarca*

Enriquez tops exec chess

ADLER Enriquez drew with PLDT's Valentino Bautista in 50 moves of a Sicilian Defense Checkhover Variation in the last round to rule the Philippine Executive Active Chess Express or PEACE invitational tournament held recently at the plush Land Bank Plaza auditorium in Malate, Manila.

The draw gave Enriquez 4.5 points in the one-day five-round event organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia (ACCA) with the support of Belgosa Media Systems and Land Bank.

Bunched at second-fifth places with four points each are Bautista, Reenan Hornilla, Orlando Pascual and Erven Perlas. Engineer Elpidio Rimando followed with 3.5 points.

Also figuring prominently was Ambassador Paul Moe of the Royal Norwegian Embassy who sailed in with 2.5 points.

Meanwhile, the Maroon team, led by Land Bank's top player Obetski Resma, captured the Land Bank Inter-Color Chess tournament recently. The Red Team finished second; Light Blue team, third; and Green team, fourth.

Other members of the Maroon tem are Cyrus Atienza, Edwin Lucena, Mar Cabahug, Ron Buenaventura, Hermie Abarca, Obet Feliciano and Boboy Hugo.

GRANDMASTER Eugene Torre (left) and Dr. Rafael Saldaña, Campus Director of the Philippine Science High School (PSHS), shake hands after making the ceremonial opening moves of the first-ever High School Chess Team Open recently at the PSHS multi-purpose gymnasium in Diliman, Quezon City. Standing from left are Belgosa Media Systems' Rowena Perez, Cita Pontino, Graciela Labrador, Juanito Calditaran of the Active Chess Center of Asia (ACCA), International Master Rodolfo Tan Cardoso, Jasmine Bernabe of Glutaphos, Loreño Tabilog of Tabilog Cargo Services, Ramon Capistrano of the PSHS PTA 06 and International arbiter Gene Pollarco.

Squash tilt Feb. 24

THIS year's squash competition starts on Feb. 24 with the staging of the Milo/SRAP (Squash Rackets Association of the Philippines) national circuit's first leg at the Makati Sports Club. National players and squash enthusiasts from various Metro Manila organization like Manila Boat Club, Manila Polo Club, Nomads, Ayala Alabang Country Club, Makati Sports Club, Asian Development Bank Squash Club, Manla Hotel Squash Club and Rockwell Squash Club are expected to participate. For more details, contact Romy Dona at tel. no. 632-5504; fax no. 636-2649; or e-mail: rdona@adb.org

COKE GO-FOR-GOAL

Ateneo-La Salle tiff set

DUMAGUETE CITY—NCR champion Ateneo de Manila and perennial finalist La Salle Academy of Iligan nosed out their respective rivals yesterday to arrange a showdown for the Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 national football title at the Silliman ballfield here.

The Metro Manilans nipped Cebu's Don Bosco Technical Center, 1-0, while the La Sallites shaded Masbate Comprehensive National High, 2-1, in the knockout semifinal matches.

Ateneo de Manila and La Salle Academy will square off at 2 p.m. today with the winner bagging its first ever national Coke Go-for-Goal crown.

Mindanao has yet to win a national title while NCR has already ruled the nationwide youth soccerfest sponsored by Coca-Cola four times.

Don Bosco and Masbate will dispute third place at 8 a.m., according to Coke Go-for-Goal project director Jojo Rodriguez.

Kurt Alvarez produced the game's–and Ateneo's–lone goal in the 17th minute. But he will be sorely missed in today's finals because of a one-game suspension for getting two yellow cards in yesterday's contest.

LSA held a 2-0 lead on Jemenrez Sabaca's and Felix Lagrosa's markers in the 30th and 61st minutes, respectively. But Masbate's Mark Angelo Marcaida trimmed the lead with a goal in the 86th.

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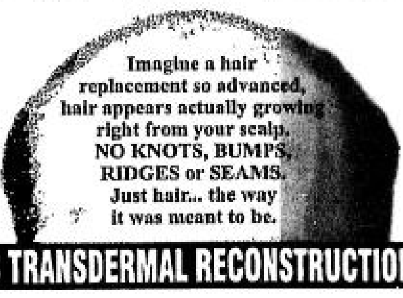
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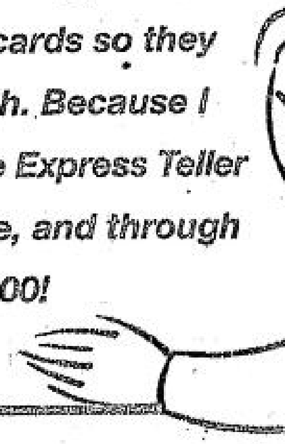

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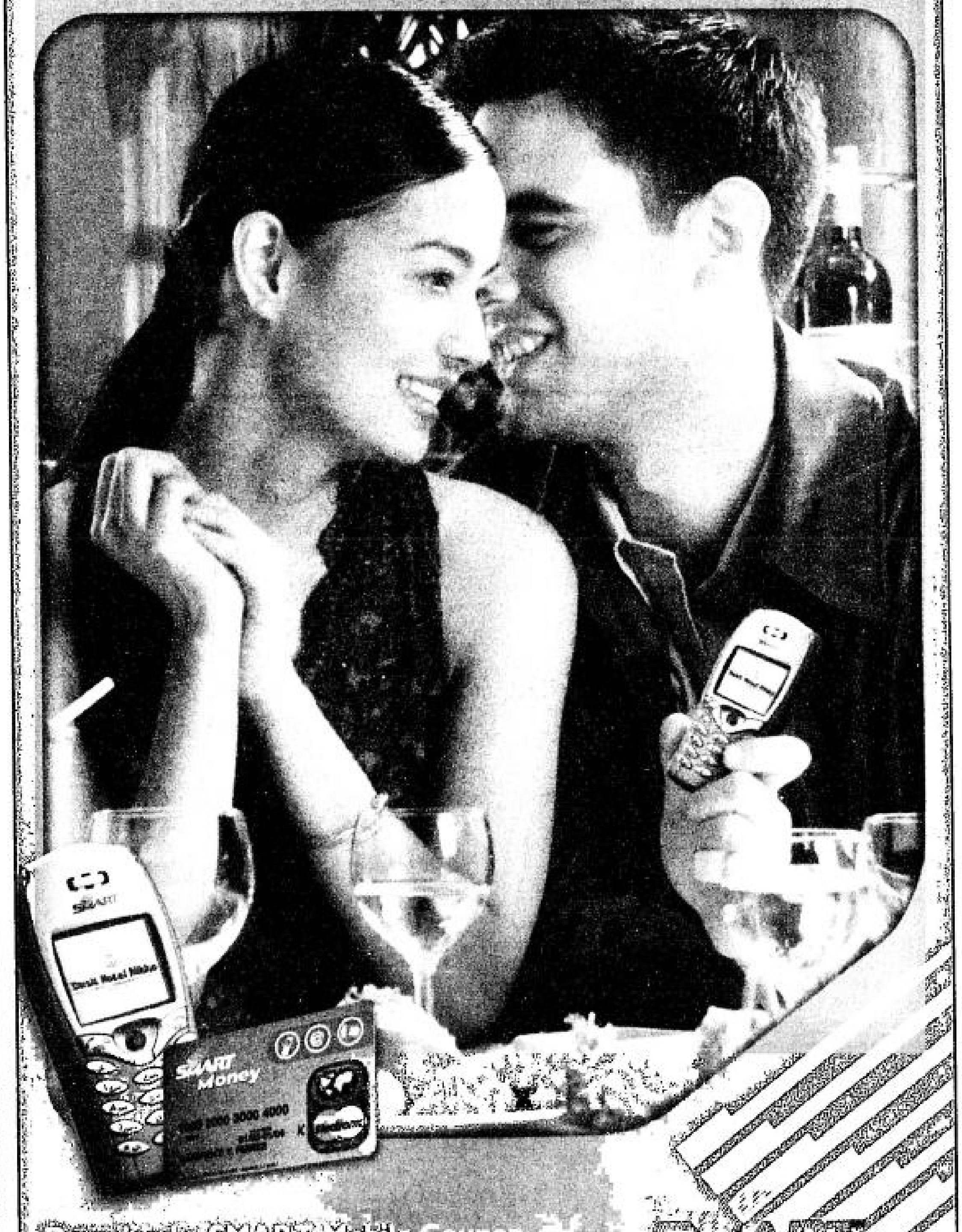

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Editor Louie C. Camino

Texting saves exec

Kidnappers planned to kill victim after payoff

By Tina Santos

A TIP sent through a text message led to the rescue of a top insurance firm executive less than 24 hours after the abduction in Caloocan City on Tuesday.

The victim's nephew was among those arrested after a brief chase in Intramuros, Manila.

Rescued unharmed was Dionisio Dungca Jr., 67, executive vice president of Mercantile Insurance Incorporated and a resident of Leyland Drive, Quezon City.

SOTO

Caloocan City police intelligence and investigation division Chief Supt. Dionicio Borromeo identified those arrested as Leonardo Soto, 33, of Paul 17th Street, New Manila, Quezon City, nephew of the victim and tagged as the mastermind and leader of the group; Paul Vincent Abeng, 20, and Anselmo Rempillo, 39, both of Bronze Street, Tugatog, Malabon.

Borromeo said the suspects, members of the gang known as the Soto Group, were remnants of the notorious Paracale Gang, a kidnap-for-ransom band.

Also recovered from the operation was the P1-million ransom money, part of the P2 million

TEXTING/ A24

Police foil robbery in Parañaque

By Christian Esguerra

HEAVILY armed robbers stormed a bank in Parañaque City and engaged police in a running gun battle yesterday morning.

The robbers managed to escape, but at least two of the culprits were injured when they engaged members of the Special Weapons and Tactics unit in a brief firefight just outside Prudential Bank on Sucat Road at 9:20 a.m., said station commander Chief Insp. Enrique Sy.

Bank officials refused to confirm if the robbers had taken anything.

But a ranking police official said the group managed to open the vault and steal nearly a million pesos.

Four of the gang members, including a female companion, disguised themselves as depositors and casually entered the bank before they disarmed the two security guards, according to Sy.

While they were scooping money from the vault, another gang member was acting as lookout and directing traffic outside to clear the area for their getaway, police said.

The man, armed with an armalite rifle, opened fire on SWAT members PO1 Arnold Sadorra and PO1 Juanito Bustillo, who were then patrolling the area.

The policemen said at least three other gang members joined the shootout even before they could return fire.

"The man was really bent on killing us," Bustillo told the INQUIRER. "He was shooting with ease until he emptied his rifle."

Sadorra said the gunman appeared "well-off," wearing a brown jacket, dark blue shirt and brown pants. He added the man was lanky, about 5'9" tall, and was probably in his 30s.

"He doesn't look like the typical, burly robber," the policeman said.

Policemen detailed at an intersection a few meters from the bank joined the firefight and shot at least two of the robbers, Bustillo said.

The rest of the group went out of the bank and dragged their fallen comrades into their getaway vans, a beige Starex (WGP-264) and a gray Toyota Lite Ace (TCZ-407).

The vehicles were later found abandoned in Gatchalian Subdivision, Las Piñas.

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The Hope of Freedom and Justice! Is Back!

QC jail worst in RP, sacked warden says

THE WORST jail in the country.

This was how former Quezon City jail warden Supt. Emilio Culang described his post shortly after he turned it over to the new warden, Supt. Gilberto Marpuri.

Culang was relieved of his post after six men staged a daring jailbreak from the Quezon City jail on Tuesday. The escapees are facing kidnap-for-ransom charges in Quezon City courts.

In his farewell remarks, Culang also lashed out at his subordinates, as he advised Marpuri "to be careful."

"You have to be careful, not only with the prisoners, but also your men," Culang told Marpuri.

Culang told reporters that he received information that jail guards knew of a possible jailbreak days before last Tuesday's escape.

For his part, Marpuri said he would do his best and be careful. The new warden said he had laid out plans and procedures to prevent anymore escapes.

The Quezon City jail sits on a 3,131-square-meter lot just behind the Central Police District Station 10 at the corner of Kamuning and Edsa.

The complex is composed of five buildings, eight dormitories and 35 cells. It houses some 2,292 inmates guarded by 143 jail guards from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

The BJMP has around 6,000 guards nationwide, with a ratio of one guard for every 33 inmates. Officials said that their ideal number is 16,000 guards, which translates to one guard for every seven inmates. *Alcuin Papa*

Witness: Guard helped in jailbreak

By Alcuin Papa

THE SUSPICION that prison guards had a hand in the escape of six hardened criminals from the Quezon City jail on Tuesday was strengthened yesterday when a witness stepped up and told the police that at least one of the guards knew of the jailbreak days before it happened.

A woman vendor at the city jail, told prison officials that she told JO3 John Wahing on Sunday night that there would be a jailbreak on Tuesday.

The vendor said she got the information from the wife of one of the fugitives, Fatima Arena, who said her husband would escape soon.

"(Wahing) just said 'Okay,'" the vendor told the authorities.

At press time, Wahing was in a closed-door meeting with other jail officials. Wahing, along with JO1 Joaquin Campo and JO1 Felix Marcos, and jail warden Supt. Emilio Culang, were sacked from their posts immediately after the jailbreak.

A source inside the jail also said that suspects Benjamin Dy and Antonio Tan, both of Taiwan, are believed to be heading for Northern Luzon, where they hope to flee the country by boarding a plane at an international airport in the region. The Bureau of Immigration has also been alerted to prevent the two Taiwanese from escaping, officials said.

Early Tuesday morning, six men sawed through the metal grills of a window at the Quezon City jail and climbed down their dormitory using a rope.

Aside from Dy, 58, and Tan, 47, those who escaped were Jaime Muog, 44, of Tiaong, Quezon, Edgar Allen Alvarez, 28, Felicisimo Laigo, 41, also of Tiaongo, and Primo Arena, 38, of Antipolo City.

The escapees then crossed the compound of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines bound for K-F Street where they boarded a waiting maroon Tamaraw FX vehicle.

The six men are facing kidnap-for-ransom charges in Quezon City courts. They were arrested in 1998 and 1999 by members of the former Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF). Dy and Tan reportedly belonged to a group that preyed on Chinese-Filipinos.

Dy and Tan were behind the abduction of four children last Oct. 26, 1988, according to Teresita Ang See, head of the Citizens Action Against Crime, an anti-crime nongovernment organization.

The victims were kidnapped while they were on their way to school near Blue Ridge, Quezon City. The kidnappers demanded P1.15 million in exchange for the children.

Dy, Tan and their cohorts were arrested the next day at the payoff site in front of the University of Santo Tomas on España Blvd., and a safehouse in Tanay, Rizal.

Arena, Alvarez, Laigo and Moog were responsible for the kidnapping of Channie Tan Son on July 14, 1999 in San Juan, Batangas.

The victim was released after a P2.6-million payoff on July 21.

PAOTF agents later rounded up the suspects.

Yesterday, Culang turned over his post to Supt. Gilberto Marpuri.

Priest-killer Manero guards Yap behind bars

By Christian Esguerra

CONVICTED priest killer Norberto Manero is now acting as the bodyguard of high-profile inmate Rey Yap, the former Mindanao town mayor whose life is said to be in danger at the New Bilibid Prisons.

Because Yap fears for his life, Manero also brought in around 10 members of his "Happy Go" gang to secure the ex-town mayor in the disciplinary cell or "bartolina."

MANERO

Yap on Tuesday asked Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong to reverse prison director Ricardo Macala's order moving the convicted mayor out of the maximum security compound after around P300,000 in fake money was allegedly seized from him last week.

In a letter, the murder convict claimed Macala refused to implement NBP legal counsel Angelito Moreno's recommendation for him to be moved back to his original cell.

Macala denied receiving a copy of the recommendation and said Yap would stay at his present cell for at least a month because he had violated prison rules.

"Why is he making so much fuss about this?" Macala asked in a phone interview Tuesday. "We're just following the rules. His (present) cell is not even the *bartolina* that people usually see in the movies. It's as ordinary as any other cell, only that it's more tightly secured."

In his letter to Datumanong, Yap claimed he had been informed by a former prisoner of a supposed plot to kill him. Another high-profile inmate had supposedly put up a P1 million reward for his killer.

In a hand-written letter dated Jan. 12, Richard Andida warned that the murder would be carried out during visiting hours in which designated inmates would create commotions at Gates 1 and 4.

The former inmate added the killer would then take advantage of the situation to liquidate Yap and his brother, Roy, also convicted for masterminding the 1992 murder of Victorio Cebedo, their family's political rival.

Yap claimed the raid on his original cell on Feb. 5 and his transfer to Building 14 were part of the supposed plot to kill him.

A prison insider said Tuesday that a riot nearly erupted at the NBP when gangs sympathetic to Yap received word that he would be moved out of the maximum security compound.

For hours, the source told the INQUIRER, gang leaders kept Yap in a "safe and neutral" place until they were sure he is safe.

They let go of Yap only after the former mayor sought the help of Manero and his gang to accompany and stay with him at Building 14.

Manero, who was convicted for the murder of Italian priest Tulio Favali in 1985, was originally staying at the maximum security compound.

"The purpose is clear," Yap wrote Datumanong. "They do not want witnesses around . . . they can easily murder me and tell the whole world that I attempted to escape, or that I resisted authorities, or that a convict ran amuck and attacked me."

'Coding' now back in Mandaluyong

By Leila Salaverria and Nelson Flores

GETTING a break, Mandaluyong City has been allowed to re-implement the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) starting today.

This brings to two the number of cities where the UVVRP is implemented. Makati did not participate in the three-week trial suspension.

Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday that the Metro Manila mayors agreed to Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos' decision to bring back the scheme popularly known as "color-coding" because traffic flow in the city has allegedly become unmanageable.

However, parts of EDSA and Ortigas that traverse Mandaluyong would continue to be UVVRP-free.

There had been mounting public complaints about the worsening traffic situation in Mandaluyong.

Abalos complained that the congestion brought about by the controversial suspension of the UVVRP has begun taking its toll on the city's economy.

He said the usual 20-minute drive from Gen. Kalentong Street to EDSA-Shaw Boulevard Crossing extended to one hour and 20 minutes.

Abalos noted that the city, declared by the Asian Institute of Management and the Department of Trade as the country's newest tiger city, could not afford such delays.

Abalos said Mandaluyong, being in the center of Metro Manila, bore the brunt of the increase volume of traffic caused by the suspension of the UVVRP. He said, being the catch basin of the Metro Manila's traffic, the city streets became congested and vehicular movement difficult.

"We also have to protect our investors. Traffic congestion causes undue delays and losses to entrepreneurs," Abalos explained.

Abalos said he earlier agreed to suspend the UVVRP if only "to be objective and give the project its day in court."

The MMDA, despite mounting complaints, has vowed to continue the suspension of the UVVRP until Feb. 21.

"At this stage, no one's in a position to say if the suspension is effective or not. That's why we're experimenting on the program. All questions will be answered after the suspension ends on Feb. 21," Fernando said.

Lawman rapped for raping girl, 16, in Crame office

By Agnes Donato

SPO4 Faustino Guererro has been accused of raping a 16-year-old girl inside his office in Camp Crame last year.

SPO4 Guererro, of Aduas Sur, Cabanatuan City, has been charged before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

The complainant, a resident of Talavera, Nueva Ecija, said that the crime took place inside Guererro's office at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame on the night of June 24, 2002.

In her affidavit, she said that she and three of her provincemates went to Manila last year to apply for work, and wound up in Guererro's office at police headquarters.

Inside his office, the police officer allegedly called her three companions to go with him outside, leaving the victim behind.

Guererro returned alone and told her that her companions had already left, the girl claimed.

She said that she asked him if she too could go home, but Guererro allegedly prevented her by locking the door before he left the office again.

She said that he was drunk when he came back later. He then took a bath and raped her afterwards.

The victim maintained that she tried to resist Guererro's advances but he overpowered her. She also said that she did not immediately report the rape for fear of her life.

Student bleeds to death in botched abortion

By Philip Tubeza

COMPUTER Science student Mary Joan Nobleza, 23, did not want to carry the 2-month-old baby in her womb and decided to have an abortion.

She ended up losing not just her child but her life as well.

Nobleza, of Pandacan, Manila, died due to severe bleeding on Tuesday, said Detective Alfredo Salazar of the Western Police District.

Brigida O. Boleza, 56, of Pureza Extension, Sta. Mesa, Manila, is now facing two counts of induced abortion resulting in homicide charges for the the death of Nobleza and her baby, Salazar said.

Police said that on Monday, Nobleza's acquaintance and a relative accompanied the victim to the suspect's house to have an abortion.

Early on Tuesday morning, Boleza prepared the victim for the operation by giving her abortifacients.

At around 11 a.m., the suspect started the "operation." By 2 p.m., Nobleza was bleeding profusely and she was already pale and motionless, police said.

Nobleza was already dead when her companions decided to take her to the Ospital ng Sampaloc, police said.

Salazar said he had evidence that would pin down Boleza for Nobleza's death.

Besides the scissors and other abortion equipment, the police also found Nobleza's bloodied underwear on the second floor of Boleza's home.

HAY SALAMAT, MR. CHAIRMAN!

Walls, corners in Metro Manila get a break

By Leila Salaverria

MALES who can't help empty their bladder anytime and anywhere will soon have to spare city posts, walls and corners.

Hope of lessening the stink came after the Metro Manila Development Authority announced it would build urinals for men in public vehicle terminals and along main thoroughfares in the metropolis.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the construction of the urinals is meant to maintain cleanliness in roads and terminals, and to keep in check the unsightly and unsanitary male habit of urinating against walls, trees or posts.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel De Dios said the MMDA personnel are already conducting a survey to determine the specific locations ideal for the urinals.

He added that the urinals won't be taking up much space and would probably not be placed in a room, but would have a short extension on the sides acting as cover.

Women, better at controlling their bladder, are not saddled with the habit of urinating in public places, Fernando said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, February 13, 2003
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 2:18-25
Gospel: Mk 7:24-30

Jesus went to the border of the Tyrian country. There he entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not remain hidden. A woman, whose small daughter had an evil spirit, heard of him and came and fell at his feet. Now this woman was a pagan, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter.

Jesus told her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she replied, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs from the children's bread." Then Jesus said to her, "You may go your way; because of such a reply the demon has gone out of your daughter." And when the woman went home, she found her child lying in bed and the demon gone.

Commentary

Today we see Jesus' solicitude toward a Greek woman whose daughter was possessed by evil spirit. Jesus' mercy is shown as reaching out beyond national boundaries. The compassion of Jesus is not confined among his peers and his people. But beyond borders, beyond nationalism, beyond races, beyond frontiers. His compassion overflows and reaches all people. It assures us that God understands us and is willing to cure and expel the "evil spirits" that possess us.

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Texting saves exec from kidnappers

From page A23

demanded by the suspects, said Insp. Marcelo Mariano, chief of the Caloocan Police follow-up unit.

Investigation revealed that Dungca, on board his Honda Civic driven by Soto, his nephew and personal driver, was abducted by the heavily armed suspects at around 9 a.m. on Tuesday along 7th Avenue, Caloocan.

Caloocan City police chief Supt. Benjardi Mantele said the successful operation was the result of an immediate police action on the information relayed through Text-A-Crime by a man who identified himself as a former member of the Soto Group.

In the text message, received by Paeng Panganiban, a civilian employee at the police headquarters, the informer bared that the victim was being held in a safehouse in Zabarte Road. The informer added that the group had planned to execute the victim immediately after the ransom pay-off.

Panganiban lost no time and relayed the information to police officials who then formed a team to go after the suspects.

Borromeo said he dispatched a team of policemen led by Mariano and conducted a surveillance on the suspects' lair and followed them up to Intramuros in Manila where the pay-off took place at around 3:30 p.m.

Before his arrest, Soto first engaged authorities in a brief chase from Intramuros to the Department of Tourism compound in Manila.

Police said one of the suspects managed to escape with P1 milion after the ransom money, which Soto, along with two female employees of Dungca had withdrawn from a PCI Bank branch in Intramuros, was divided among the gang members.

Sensing that they were being followed by the police, Soto sped off and tried to evade the pursuing lawmen.

Soto was cornered and caught.

He next led the team of policemen to their safehouse on Zabarte Road, Caloocan where Dungca was being held, guarded by two other suspects.

The two guards were subdued and Dungca was rescued without any struggle.

A week ago, Dungca said he became a victim of extortion through text messaging, believed to be the the handiwork of the same gang, as he was forced to cough off P80,000.

Dungca said Sotto delivered the money, bolstering police theory that he was the mastermind and leader of the gang.

SOTO GANG
Insurance executive Dionisio Dungca Jr. confront his captors at police headquarters in Camp Crame.
JOAN BONDOC

Roilo Golez, security risk

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez has made himself a security risk to the government after he wrongly reported the closure of the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad and the transfer of its operations to Amman, Jordan.

"Such an announcement serves no visible purpose, especially since it was inaccurate," said Foreign Secretary Blas Ople.

What's wrong with Golez is that he talks too much.

* * *

The President's national security adviser is supposed to be a guy who works on the sidelines. This means that he makes himself as invisible to the public as possible.

His job calls for great secrecy because he heads the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency or NICA (formerly the National Intelligence and Security Agency or NISA). Don't laugh, but the NICA is the local counterpart of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

In short, Golez is the local version of the CIA chief.

* * *

But since Golez talks so much—apparently so people won't forget him come 2004 elections—he's endangering national security.

Why doesn't the President just appoint Golez presidential spokesperson for national security since the guy loves to talk?

If that kind of position is non-existent, then GMA should create such a position to afford Golez full public exposure.

* * *

President Macapagal-Arroyo is flip-flopping in dealing with the Muslim rebels hiding notorious criminals in Maguindanao.

One day after ordering the military to stop its attack on a camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the President issued another order resuming the attack.

Her indecisiveness might be misconstrued as weakness by both the Armed Forces of the Philippines, of which she is commander-in-chief, and the MILF.

The military looks down upon leaders it perceives to be weaklings.

* * *

That's what the government gets for pretending that the MILF is not a terrorist group but one espousing a Moro republic.

Everybody knows that the MILF is a local terrorist organization because it supports terrorist and criminal groups like the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon Gang.

* * *

The MILF has apparently mistaken for weakness the government's "see no evil, hear no evil, smell no evil" attitude in dealing with the rebel group.

Recalcitrant Moros are like dogs that can smell fear in their opponents. They will chase you around until you stand your ground. Give a recalcitrant Moro your fingers and he will want to have your whole arm.

* * *

For all his faults, President Erap tamed the "wild" Moros by unleashing the "dogs of war" on them.

That's the reason for Erap's high popularity ratings in Mindanao even to this date. Erap called the Moros' bluff.

GMA would do well to do an Erap, just on this one.

* * *

Congratulations to Salvador A. Pleyto who's been appointed undersecretary of public works and highways!

Pleyto has risen from the ranks at the Department of Public Works and Highways, starting as a lowly survey aide on Nov. 16, 1966.

Because he worked in the field, Pleyto knew how to deal with the people in rural areas where the government built roads and bridges.

* * *

I first heard about Pleyto in the 1980s when I went hunting in Mindoro Oriental with some buddies.

While resting under a tree on the side of a highway under construction, we noticed Mangyans, Mindoro natives, working side by side with laborers from the lowlands.

We asked the road engineer why natives were being used in road-building when—pardon my saying so—most Mangyans were perceived to be lazy and would not go back to work after receiving their wages for the week.

* * *

"But the D.E. has proven that they work hard when given the chance. As you can see, they are as industrious as the lowlanders," said the civil engineer at the site.

"D.E." referred to was Pleyto who was the DPWH district engineer at the time.

Years later when I personally met Pleyto, I told him about the time in Mindoro when he used indigenous labor to build a highway.

* * *

He said the reason DPWH road-building projects were not harassed by rebels or the local people in areas where he was assigned was his use of indigenous labor.

"*Paano kami guguluhin ng mga rebelde o taga roon kung ginagamit namin ang kanilang mga kama-kamag-anak* (Why would the rebels or the locals harass us when we were using their relatives)?" he said.

Government people who work in far-flung areas should take note of Pleyto's philosophy—the national government should always look for a chance to please the local folk by giving them priority in employment in local labor before taking in strangers.

'Millions stolen at City Hall'

By Jerome Aning

MILLIONS of pesos in real property taxes being collected in Manila end up in the pockets of unscrupulous tellers at City Hall, a city councilor bared on Tuesday.

Councilor Edward Tan claimed he has in his possession "very strong evidence that can prove that millions are being stolen" by employees at the city treasurer's office.

Tan said that the theft is simple enough. A teller collects real property tax payments and then issues the taxpayer a valid receipt.

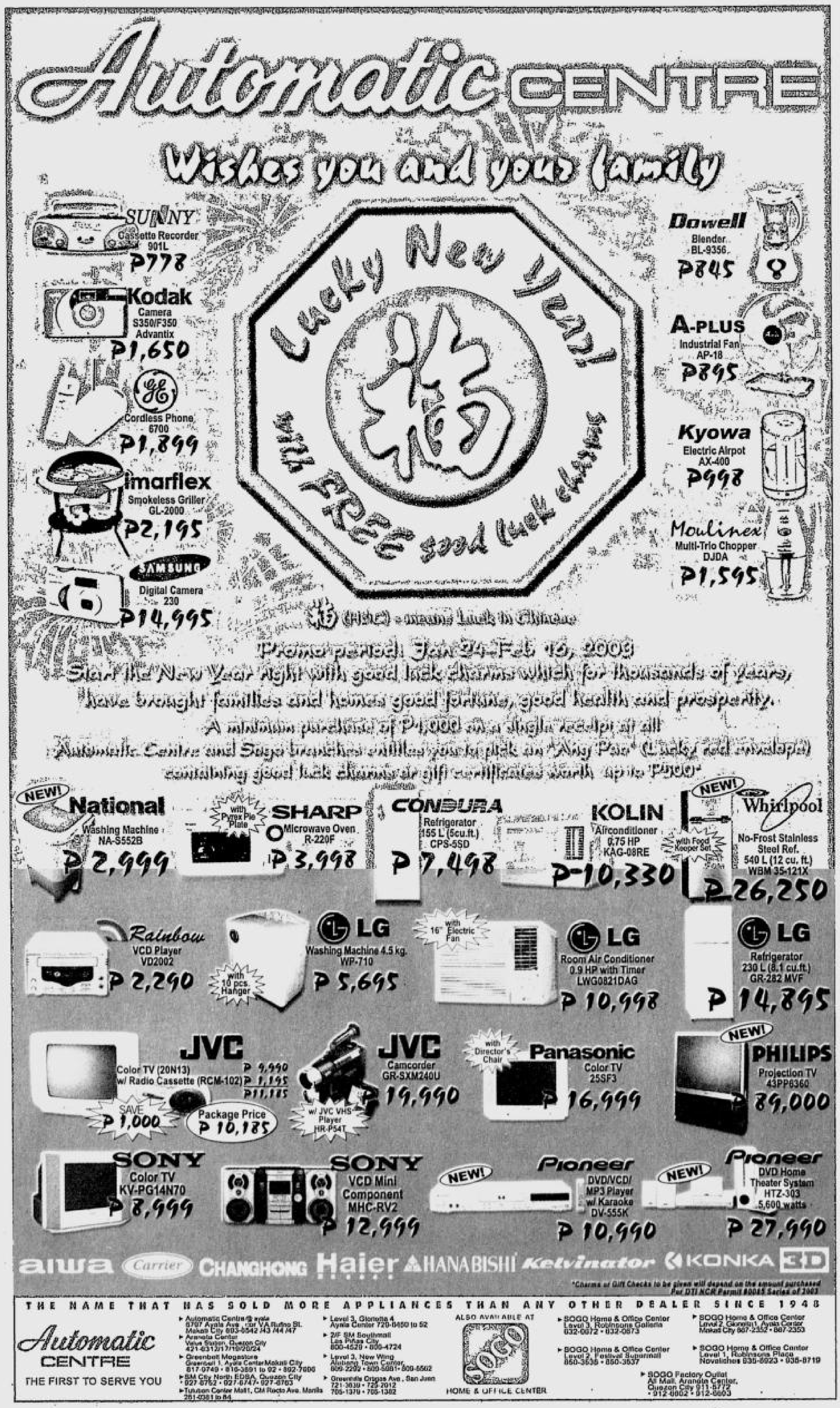
But later, he said, the teller uses another blank identical receipt to void the transaction. This, he said, will later appear as a negative entry in the auditor's book.

The money ends up in the pocket of the employee who voided the transaction. Tan added that in December 2002, not less than P100,000 worth of taxes was stolen through six voided transactions.

"How much money (would be) lost if 20 tellers void six transactions each? This translates to P2 million a week, P8 million a month and P96 million a year," he said.

Tan has already asked the Council and city accountant Gloria Quilantang to investigate the anomaly.

"We do not know how far this goes," he said. "There may be more people involved."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*Charms or Gift Checks to be given will depend on the amount purchased
Per DTI NCR Permit #0085 Series of 2003

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(HóC)-means Luck in Chinese

THIS CHINESE New Year, **Automatic Centre** wishes you good fortune! Bring home good luck charms in our **Lucky New Year** Promo! For a minimum purchase of P1,000 in a single receipt at any **Automatic Centre** or **Sogo** branch up to **February 16, 2003**, you get to pick an ***"ang pao"*** (lucky red envelope) containing a **good luck charm** or a **gift certificate worth up to P500**. Prizes are given away according to the amount purchased.

The Chinese New Year is one of the most festive annual events in the world. It is one of the most anticipated family celebrations, where parents and their children gather together to decorate their surroundings, give presents and have supper together to welcome good tidings for the coming year. Fireworks and dragon dances are held to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck to them.

What's interesting to note is that Filipinos, although being predominantly Christians, also observe this feast every year. What's more, they also believe that good fortune and prosperity will come to their families with the help of Chinese good luck charms placed inside their homes.

Bring good luck, good health and prosperity to your homes in the Year of the Sheep! Visit **Automatic Centre** or **Sogo** and have a **Lucky New Year**!

ADVT.

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ALL DIGITAL SOUND CINEMAS

G1 GLORIETTA 1

1	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2	MAGNIFICO
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

G4 GLORIETTA 4

1	WHITE OLEANDER
2	THEY
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30
4	THE EYE
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7	HERO

GB1 GREENBELT 1

1	SWEPT AWAY (EXCLUSIVE) 11:50, 1:40, 3:30, 5:20, 7:10, 9:00
2	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 11:50, 1:40, 3:30, 5:20, 7:10, 9:00
	Onstage OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 13, 14 & 15

GB3 GREENBELT 3

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30
3	THEY 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30
4	WHITE OLEANDER 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
5	HERO 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	WHITE OLEANDER
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	THEY
5	HERO

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	HERO
2 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS)	BETTER THAN SEX
4 GOLD(DTS ES)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5 GOLD(DOLBY EX)	THEY
6 GOLD(SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7 GOLD(DOLBY EX)	WHITE OLEANDER
8	AB NORMAL
9	MAGNIFICO
10	I SPY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	MAGNIFICO
2	
3 (DTS)	
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	HERO

Masagana CINEMA ①②&③
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	AB NORMAL
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	MAGNIFICO

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	HERO
2	AB NORMAL
3	MAGNIFICO
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
5	SUKDULAN

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4	AB NORMAL
5	BETTER THAN SEX
6	MAGNIFICO

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	MAGNIFICO

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to13

SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	8 MILE
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515

1	MAGNIFICO
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	RESERVE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	AB NORMAL
3	KALARO
4	MAGNIFICO

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4	WHITE OLEANDER
5	MAGNIFICO
6	AB NORMAL
7 (DTS)	HERO
8 (SDDS)	I SPY
9 (DOLBY)	THEY

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	AB NORMAL
2	MAGNIFICO
3	BETTER THAN SEX
4 (SDDS)	HERO
5	I SPY
6 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7 (DTS)	THEY
8	SUKDULAN
9	BALAT SIBUYAS

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	MAGNIFICO
2 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4 (DOLBY)	HERO
5	AB NORMAL

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	MAGNIFICO
2	AB NORMAL
3 (DTS)	HERO
4	SUKDULAN
5 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	AB NORMAL

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	AB NORMAL

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	SEX & SEN
Lords	MAGNIFICO
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	AB NORMAL
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	MAGNIFICO
4	THEY

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	MAGNIFICO
3	BETTER THAN SEX
4	AB NORMAL
5	HERO

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	MAGNIFICO
2	AB NORMAL

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta
MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821 8242 8400

1	AB NORMAL
2	MAGNIFICO
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 (SDDS)	HERO
5 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	WHITE OLEANDER
7	THEY

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821 8242 8400

1	AB NORMAL
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926, 534-2185

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	AB NORMAL
3 (DTS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MAGNIFICO
2 (DTS)	THEY
3 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4	AB NORMAL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	MAGNIFICO
2 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS)	THEY
4	AB NORMAL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	SUKDULAN
2	8 MILE
3 (DOLBY)	I SPY
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	MAGNIFICO
2	BELOW
3 (DOLBY)	HOT CHICCK
4 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2 (DTS)	MAGNIFICO
3	HOT CHICK

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	AB NORMAL
3 (DTS)	MAGNIFICO
4	BETTER THAN SEX

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	TRY SEVENTEEN
3 (DTS)	AB NORMAL
4	MAGNIFICO
5	BALAT SIBUYAS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	AB NORMAL

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	THEY
3	AB NORMAL

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 (DTS)	AB NORMAL
4 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	MAGNIFICO
3	AB NORMAL

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SUKDULAN
2	HOT CHICK
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	LORD OF THE RING

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	AB NORMAL
3 (DTS ES)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	BELOW

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	MAGNIFICO
2	AB NORMAL
3 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
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1	WHITE OLEANDER
2	MAGNIFICO
3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4	THEY
5	HERO
6	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	I SPY

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7181416

1	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2	THEY
3	HERO
4	BETTER THAN SEX
5	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6	SUKDULAN
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	WHITE OLEANDER
9	MAGNIFICO
10	I SPY

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	I SPY
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	SUKDULAN
4	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
7	HERO
8	THEY
9	MAGNIFICO
10	RING (JAPANESE)
11	WHITE OLEANDER
12	BETTER THAN SEX

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	HERO
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	WHITE OLEANDER
4	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
5	THEY
6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7	SUKDULAN
8	I SPY
9	THE EYE
10	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
11	MAGNIFICO
12	AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	SHANGHAI KNIGTS
2	I SPY
3	SHANGHAI KNIGTS
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	THEY
6	PELIKULA AT LIPUNAN
7	BETTER THAN SEX
8	THE EYE
9	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
10	HERO
11	MAGNIFICO
12	WHITE OLEANDER

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	THE EYE
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	MAGNIFICO
4	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
5	WHITE OLEANDER
6	THEY
7	HERO
8	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM SOUTHMALL
8096888

1	WHITE OLEANDER
2	HERO
3	THE EYE
4	THEY
5	BETTER THAN SEX
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	MAGNIFICO
8	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
9	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
10	I SPY

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	RING (JAPANESE)
4	HOT CHICK
5	FEMME FATALE
6	BALAT SIBUYAS
7	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
8	I SPY

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2	CLOSED
3	I SPY
4	8 MILE
5	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6	ONE HOUR PHOTO
7	CLOSED
8	TRY SEVENTEEN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	I SPY
4	MAGNIFICO
5	THEY
6	AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294875

1	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	MAGNIFICO
4	AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	I SPY
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	REPLI-KATE
6	THEY

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	HERO
2	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
3	MAGNIFICO
4	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	I SPY
2	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
3	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-6976

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:15 MF/11:45/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 11:00 MF/11:20/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/ 10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

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5	THEY
6	MAGNIFICO

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6	SUKDULAN

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4	TRY SEVENTEEN
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO
6	LORD OF THE RINGS 2

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INQUIRER WAS THERE

'Chicago' blows wind out of Oscar competition with 13 nominations

By Ruben V. Nepales

BEVERLY HILLS—"Chicago," the movie that Madonna tried to make because of a juicy musical role that eventually went to Renee Zellweger, razzle-dazzled the competition with 13 nominations in the 75th Annual Academy Awards.

The Philippine Daily INQUIRER was present when the nominations for the Academy Awards were announced Tuesday by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences President Frank Pierson and Oscar-winning actress Marisa Tomei. The atmosphere at the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn Theater was charged with excitement and tension, as the announcement was broadcast live and camera bulbs flashed.

"Chicago" became the instant early Oscar favorite after the announcement of the nominations. The event was attended by the most prestigious media outlets around the world. The musical competes against "Gangs of New York," Martin Scorsese's 19th century epic which won 10 nominations, "The Hours," "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" and "The Pianist."

"THE PIANIST." Best actor nominee Adrian Brody. AP

VIVA ESPAÑA. Spanish cinema's pride, Pedro Almodovar, earns a berth in the prestigious best director category for "Talk To Her." AFP

Streep record

In a year of strong women roles, Meryl Streep failed to snag a best actress nomination for her performance in "The Hours." But her best supporting actress nomination for her role in "Adaptation" made her the most nominated performer in the Academy's history. With 13 acting nominations, Streep broke a tie with Katherine Hepburn for the biggest number of acting nominations.

Streep's "The Hours" co-star, Nicole Kidman, got the best actress nomination along with Renee Zellweger, in the floozie role that Madonna had wanted to play ("Chicago"), Diane Lane ("Unfaithful"), Julianne Moore ("Far from Heaven") and Salma Hayek ("Frida").

Richard Gere, a recent Golden Globe winner for best actor ("Chicago"), did not make it to the Academy's best actor category. The best actor nominees are Jack Nicholson ("About Schmidt"), Nicolas Cage ("Adaptation"), Michael Caine ("The Quiet American"), Daniel Day-Lewis ("Gangs of New York") and Adrien Brody ("The Pianist").

Nicholson's 12th

For Caine, the nomination was an achievement in itself. He was quoted as saying that he fought hard to keep "The Quiet American," which was critically lauded but shown in only a few US theaters, from going straight to video.

Nicholson's 12th nomination was also for the Academy's history books. He became Oscar's most nominated male performer.

Streep was expected to be the double nominee. But it was Julianne Moore who earned that honor at the announcement that was held at the ungodly hour of 5:30 a.m. so the news could be broken in the network morning news/talk shows in the East Coast. For her performance as a housewife reading a Virginia Woolf novel in the 1950s in "The Hours," Moore is also in the running for best supporting actress. She is up against Streep, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Queen Latifah (both in "Chicago") and Kathy Bates ("About Schmidt").

Walken's second

Christopher Walken, unanimously praised by critics in Steven Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can," won his second Oscar nomination. He earned a chance to get a companion for the best supporting actor statuette that he won in 1978 for the seminal "The Deer Hunter."

Walken faces tough competition in Paul Newman ("The Road to Perdition"), Ed Harris ("The Hours), Chris Cooper ("Adaptation") and John C. Reilly ("Chicago").

In a surprise nomination that may symbolize Spanish cinema's ascendancy in the filmmaking world, Pedro Almodovar earned a berth in the prestigious best director category. Almodovar joined an elite circle that includes Scorsese who has been nominated several times in this category but has never won, Rob Marshall ("Chicago," his first nomination), Roman Polanski ("The Pianist") and Stephen Daldry ("The Hours").

The other Spanish filmmakers who made news at the announcement include Mexican director Carlos Carrera, whose controversial and timely film about a priest, "The Crime of Father Amaro," led the best foreign language film nominees. Carrera's fellow Mexicans, Carlos Cuaron and Alfonso Cuaron, who were surprise but deserving best original screenplay nominees for the sexy "Y Tu Mama Tambien," completed the rally for Latin cinema.

Coming soon

The INQUIRER earlier interviewed Carrera and his actor, Gael Garcia Bernal, who stars in "The Crime of Father Amaro," showing in Manila on Feb. 19, and "Y Tu Mama Tambien," for a coming article.

Carrera's competition in the best foreign language film are "Hero" (China), "The Man Without a Past" (Finland), "Nowhere in Africa" (Germany) and "Zus and Zo" (The Netherlands). The Philippine entry was Gil Portes' enjoyable "Mga Munting Tinig."

Disney dominated the relatively new best animated film category with three films: the outer space adventure "Treasure Planet," which opens in the Philippines on Feb. 26, "Lilo and Stitch" and the splendid "Spirited Away." The other two nominees are "Ice Age" and "Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron."

"My Big Fat Greek Wedding," last year's surprise big hit, earned just one nomination, for best original screenplay which was written by the film's lead actress, Nia Vardalos.

After the announcement, the INQUIRER asked Academy president Pierson to comment on the welcome trend of important women roles that began last year.

"I think that's terrific," he replied. "We needed that. It's a great thing to recognize women in films. I'm looking forward to seeing the women on stage on Oscar night."

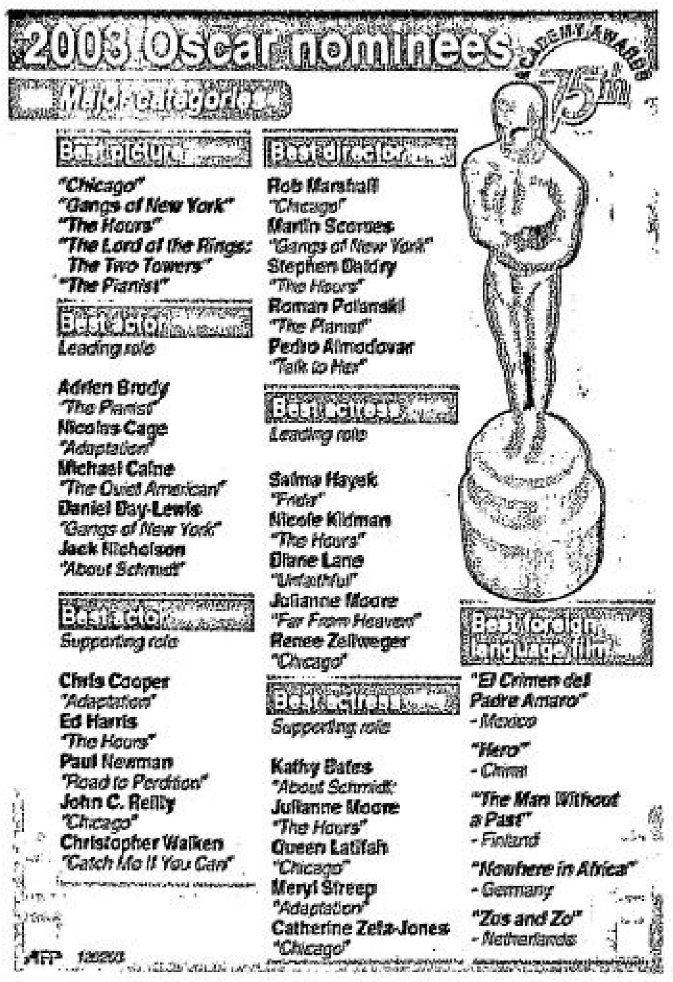
War effects

The INQUIRER also asked Pierson how a possible US war with Iraq would affect what is dubbed as "entertainment world's biggest show" in March.

"I don't anticipate at this stage that we'll make any changes unless there would be a particular event connected with the war that would make an issue for us. But outside of heightened security, I don't see what that would be at this point."

Pierson revealed the theme of this year's show to INQUIRER. "Gil Cates, the producer, is going to put on a good show like he does every year. The main thing is recognizing 75 years of Oscar. There will be a great deal on the history and evolution of the film art from a kind of crude entertainment to what it has become today, which is a diverse field of filmmaking that embraces everything from cartoons to opera."

The Academy Awards is scheduled on Sunday, March 23, at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. A half-hour arrival program, which has become a much-anticipated segment among Oscar fans, will precede the main show.



2003 Oscar nominees

Major categories

Best picture
"Chicago"
"Gangs of New York"
"The Hours"
"The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers"
"The Pianist"

Best actor
Leading role
Adrien Brody
"The Pianist"
Nicolas Cage
"Adaptation"
Michael Caine
"The Quiet American"
Daniel Day-Lewis
"Gangs of New York"
Jack Nicholson
"About Schmidt"

Best actor
Supporting role
Chris Cooper
"Adaptation"
Ed Harris
"The Hours"
Paul Newman
"Road to Perdition"
John C. Reilly
"Chicago"
Christopher Walken
"Catch Me If You Can"

Best director
Rob Marshall
"Chicago"
Martin Scorsese
"Gangs of New York"
Stephen Daldry
"The Hours"
Roman Polanski
"The Pianist"
Pedro Almodovar
"Talk to Her"

Best actress
Leading role
Salma Hayek
"Frida"
Nicole Kidman
"The Hours"
Diane Lane
"Unfaithful"
Julianne Moore
"Far From Heaven"
Renee Zellweger
"Chicago"

Best actress
Supporting role
Kathy Bates
"About Schmidt"
Julianne Moore
"The Hours"
Queen Latifah
"Chicago"
Meryl Streep
"Adaptation"
Catherine Zeta-Jones
"Chicago"

Best foreign language film
"El Crimen del Padre Amaro"
- Mexico
"Hero"
- China
"The Man Without a Past"
- Finland
"Nowhere in Africa"
- Germany
"Zus and Zo"
- Netherlands

AFP 120203

BOYZ II MEN CONCERT

Fresh from their successful and sold-out concerts in four cities in Japan, Boyz II Men will celebrate Valentine's Day in Manila, with a one-night only concert tomorrow night at The Fort Open Field. The Grammy Award-winning mega-platinum R&B group will serenade local fans with their hits like "I'll Make Love To You," "End of the Road," "Four Seasons of Loneliness," "On Bended Knee," "Water Runs Dry" and their latest hit single, "The Color of Love" and the chart-topping "One Sweet Day." The show is presented by Jag Jeans, Smart Communications and New Close-Up Mint. For ticket inquiries, call 911-5555 or 373-5734. Boyz II Men will have an exclusive live interview at 5:30 p.m. today on Magic 89.9 dwTM. Photo shows members (from left) Nate, Mike, Wanya and Shawn.

Ratsky celebrates Valentine's Day

A THREE-DAY love affair with music is up at Ratsky Malate as Serenity and Gladys and the Boxers with K serenade the audience on Feb. 13, 10 p.m.

Sexy actress Maui Taylor sizzles on stage with her surprise guest Feb. 14.

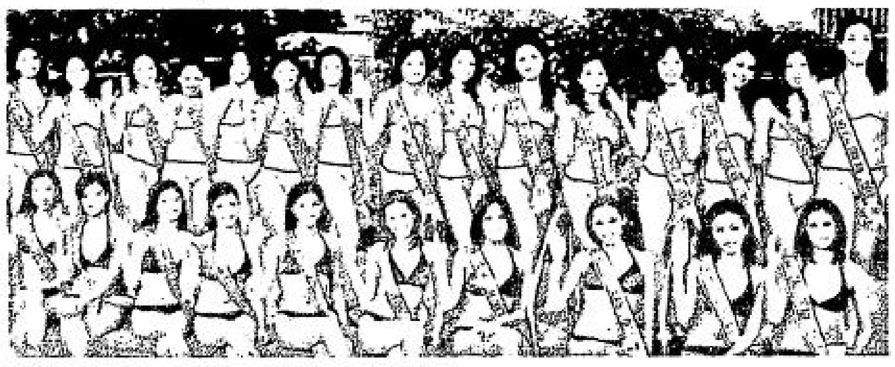
Livewire and Tribe of Levi take centerstage Feb. 15, 10 p.m. onwards.

At Ratsky Morato, the love day also starts with three special pre-Valentine shows starting Feb. 13 with Freeverse and 3QS.

Feb. 14, sexy star Aubrey Miles sets the stage on fire in a scintillating show with Rey Kilay.

Feb. 15, experience great music from Pure Instinct and Poetry, 10 p.m. onwards.

For inquiries, call Ratsky Malate at 523-8610, Ratsky Morato at 373-9882 or Ratsky Cebu at (032) 234-21 13.



'MUTYA NG CALOOCAN' PAGEANT

In celebration of the 41st anniversary of its cityhood, the local government of Caloocan and the Mutya ng Caloocan Charities team jointly present the annual search for the Mutya ng Caloocan. The pageant, which seeks to highlight the best and brightest young people of Caloocan, has produced the likes of Aubrey Miles and Josephine Rose "JR" Estrada. This year, 27 ladies will vie for two titles Mutya ng Caloocan and Mutya ng Caloocan-Tourism. The Mutya ng Caloocan Charities is a private, non-profit organization which will be officially launched during the pageant's finals night on Feb. 16. The group is headed by Gwendolyn "Gigi" Malonzo, with Mitch Cajayon, Jennifer de Vera, Arlene Emnace, Christopher "PJ" Malonzo and Marlon de Chavez, who is also the pageant's stage director.

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'Eat Bulaga' live telecast highlights Parañaque cityhood anniversary

MARQUEZ

GMA 7's noontime show, "Eat Bulaga," will air live from the Parañaque City Hall Quadrangle today, as the city marks its fifth founding anniversary.

Some 1,000 members of the Kilusan ng may Kapansanan sa Lungsod ng Parañaque, Inc. (KKLP) will be the special audience and participants in the lucrative game portions of the noontime show.

Early in the morning, Parañaque pays tribute to the physically challenged as KKLP members walk with Mayor Joey P. Marquez to usher in the celebration.

"Persons with disabilities in our city occupy a special place in the heart of Mayor Marquez," said KKLP president Arnold C. Castillo. "He always finds time to interact with us. He even personally boots the bill for many of our projects and activities if government funds are not available."

"Alay Lakad Para Sa May Kapansanan 2003" starts at 5 a.m. from two assembly points, with Marquez heading the District II group that will proceed from McDonald's-BF on Dr. A. Santos Ave. (Sucat Road).

The District I group headed by Rep. Ed Zialcita will converge at Liana's Supermarket in Barangay San Isidro and wind up at the City Hall Quadrangle at noon.

On Feb. 13, 1998, former President Fidel Ramos signed into law R.A. No. 8507 converting Parañaque into a highly urbanized city.

City Ordinance No. 98-07 declares Feb. 13 thereafter as the city's foundation day.

Following the live telecast of "Eat Bulaga" are the much-awaited Bb. Parañaque and Gng. Parañaque beauty pageants, which also serve as highlights of the anniversary celebration.

Cash prizes totaling P250,000 and trophies are at stake, with each title holder winning P50,000, according to the city's tourism officer Alice Bengson. "Dance Mania," a street-dancing contest participated in by all the city's 16 barangays, extends the cityhood celebration on Feb. 22.

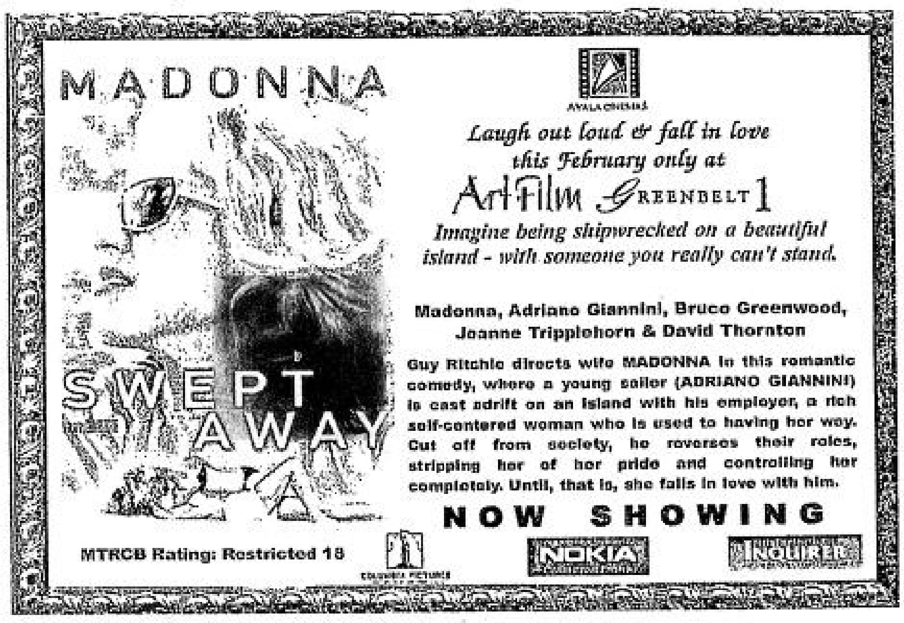
The top three finishers will receive P50,000, P30,000 and P20,000, respectively.

Feleo . . .

From page A29

great if she had joined her folks and ate in this episode.

Well, maybe in another show sometime soon? That would give us something even better to look forward to. Perhaps a TV drama can be written specifically for them. How about it, ABS-CBN?


MADONNA
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AYALA CINEMAS
Laugh out loud & fall in love this February only at
ArtFilm Greenbelt 1
Imagine being shipwrecked on a beautiful island - with someone you really can't stand.
Madonna, Adriano Giannini, Bruce Greenwood, Joanne Tripplehorn & David Thornton
Guy Ritchie directs wife MADONNA in this romantic comedy, where a young sailor (ADRIANO GIANNINI) is cast adrift on an island with his employer, a rich self-centered woman who is used to having her way. Cut off from society, he reverses their roles, stripping her of her pride and controlling her completely. Until, that is, she falls in love with him.
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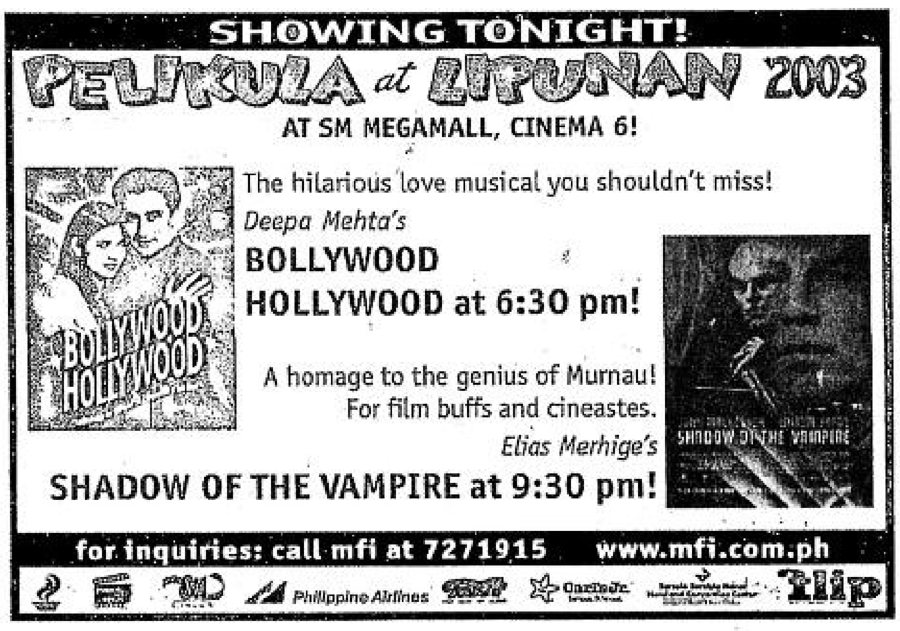
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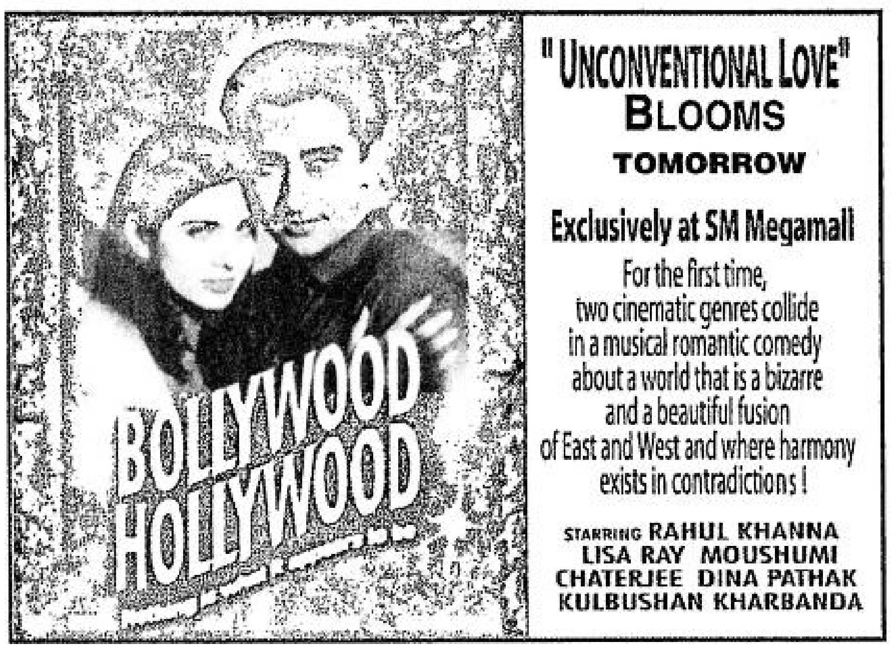
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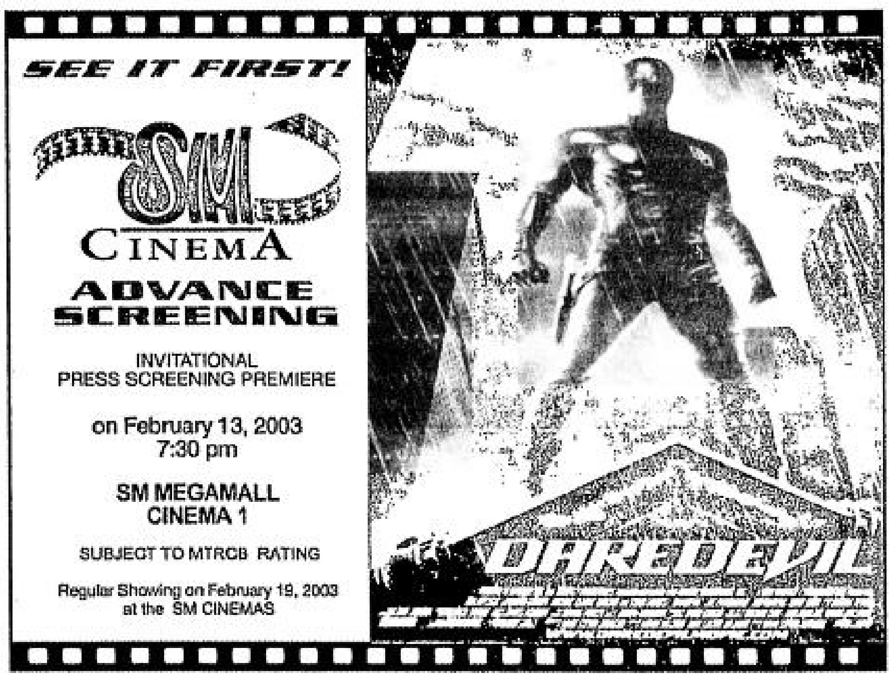
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SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 1
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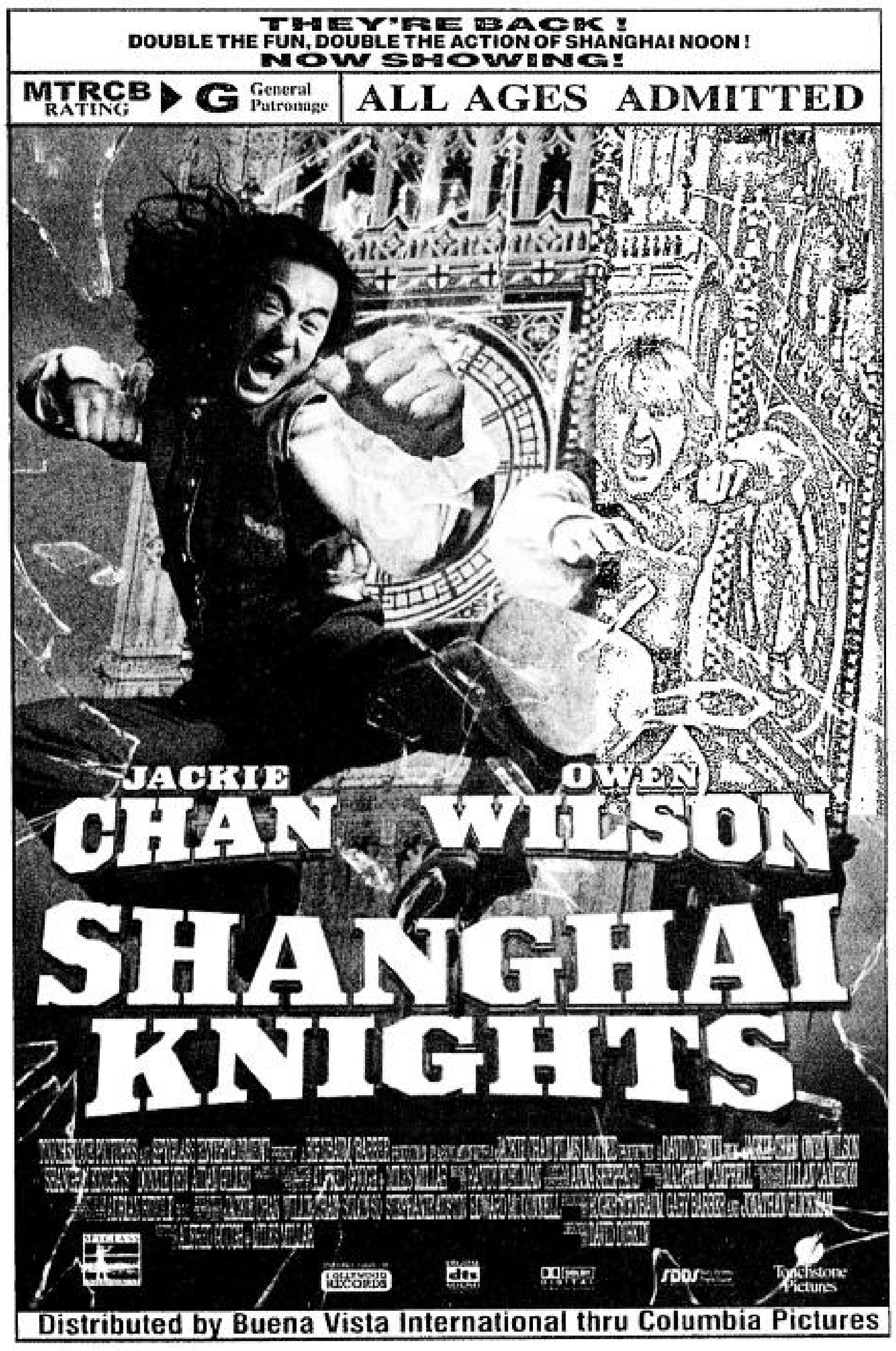
DAREDEVIL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Theme song sung by: GARY VALENCIANO
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Pelikula ni Maryo J. de los Reyes, dgpi.
★ Truly a magnificent film. Bravo, Magnifico! - *Butch Francisco, The Philippine Star*
★ The First really good movie of 2003! - *Lito B. Zulueta, Philippine Daily Inquirer*
★ "Magnifico is Magnificent" - *Mario Hernando, Malaya*
★ "Pang-Oscar ang kalidad ng Magnifico" - *Archie de Calma, Imbestigador*
★ "Would that we all support this movie with lots of heart and the strength of its quite and hopeful honesty" - *Rina Jimenez-David, Philippine Daily Inquirer*
★ The whole thing is very Pinoy and is a particularly welcome intrusion in our times when people are despairing in this country. - *Conrado de Quiros, Philippine Daily Inquirer*
Violett

Feleo family of actors on 'Maala-ala Mo Kaya'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Thursday, Channel 2's "Maala-ala Mo Kaya" had a special treat in store for its regular viewers—an episode that featured the performances of the "Feleo family of actors"—papa **Johnny Delgado**, mama **Laurice Guillen**, and their daughter, singer-actress **Ana Feleo**.

The combination comedy-drama episode cast the Feleos in their real-life relationship as parents and daughter, but just about everything else was judiciously adjusted for maximum surprise and entertainment value:

The episode's conflict revolved around Laurice's feelings of insecurity and fear due to her menopause and Ana's impending wedding.

Both problems threatened a change of life that Laurice's character wasn't ready to accept, so she moped, sulked, lashed out, accused her husband of infidelity, and in general made her love ones miserable with her radical and confounding shifts of mood.

It was great to see the three Feleos acting so naturally with each other. Fact is, they weren't acting at all, at least not in the *porma* and *hagod* style that we see so often on TV. They understood and empathized with their characters' feelings, and just gave vent to them with no pretense or artifice.

Since the episode's basic problem was related to her character, Laurice had the most screen time and the most challenging scenes to essay, and she played her role with relish, and to the hilt.

Many of her screen (TV-film) performances have been of the dramatic variety, so it was a delightful surprise to see her cutting up in some of the episode's comic scenes.

She also didn't balk at sequences that required her character to look and be at her most unglamorous and vulnerable.

Aside from these light moments, the episode also had scenes that were difficult for the actors involved, and Laurice won viewers admiration for her ability to do full justice to them. It was this combination of lightheartedness and thespic intensity and vitality that made her performance memorable.

It taught us that the true actor does not distinguish between acting styles, or the relative lightness or weightiness of scenes. What matters is the credible creation of a three-dimensional character whom viewers can emphatize with totally, because everything that character does comes from truth.

As for Johnny, he's played lead roles in many productions, but he judiciously "sized down" his performance here, because he knew that the story's main focus was on the character of the wife and mother.

Which is not to say that he deferred to Laurice. His character was still completely there, and he shone in some scenes where the focus shifted to his character's feelings. But, in keeping with the episode's structure, he played his character at a lower key than usual.

Another surprise was provided by Ana Feleo's honest and felt portrayal of the daughter who wants to get married but feels guilty about her adding to her mother's fear of growing old and feeling useless.

Ana hasn't had that much acting experience, but her performance was as natural, confident and winning as her parents. Those Feleo and Guillen thespic genes are alive and well!

Fact is, Johnny and Laurice have another gifted and lovely daughter, **Yna**, the ice-skating champion, young TV star and Bayanihan dancer, and it would have been

FELEO/ A28

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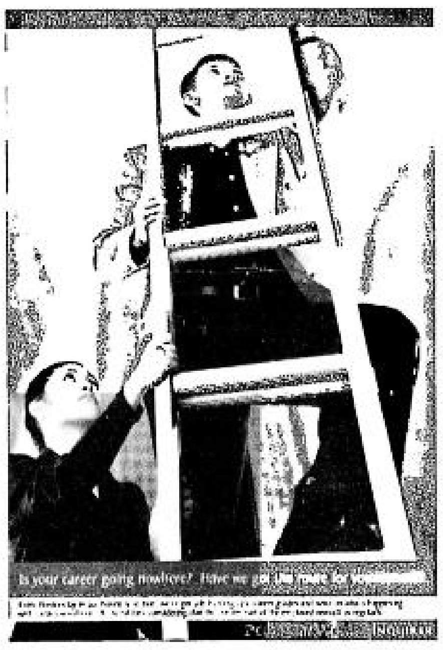

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SCREAM NOW LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW!

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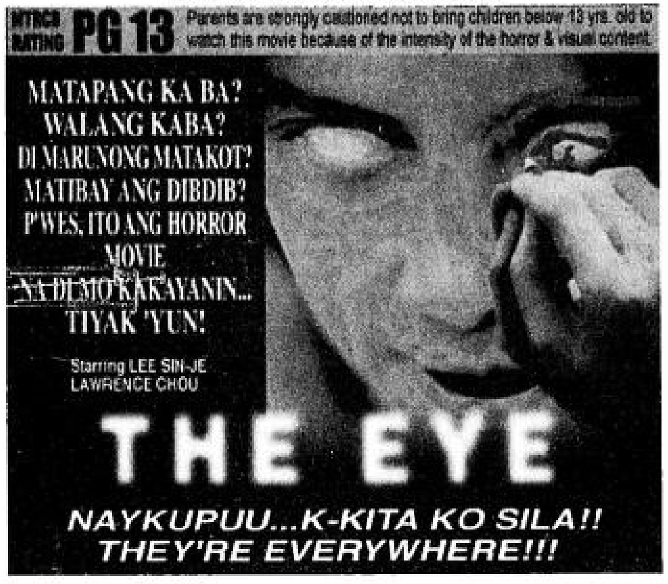

MATAPANG KA BA?
WALANG KABA?
DI MARUNONG MATAKOT?
MATIBAY ANG DIBDIB?
P'WES, ITO ANG HORROR MOVIE
NA DI MO KAKAYANIN...
TIYAK 'YUN!
Starring LEE SIN-JE
LAWRENCE CHOU
THE EYE
NAYKUPUU...K-KITA KO SILA!!
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!!!

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HERO
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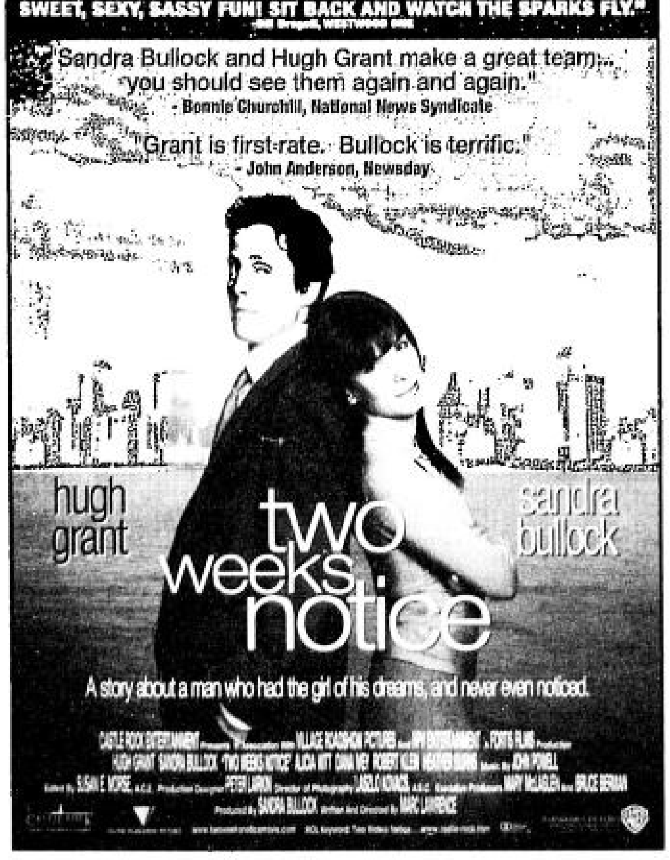
"Sandra Bullock and Hugh Grant make a great team... you should see them again and again."
- Bonnie Churchill, National News Syndicate

"Grant is first-rate. Bullock is terrific."
- John Anderson, Newsday



hugh grant
two weeks notice
sandra bullock
A story about a man who had the girl of his dreams, and never even noticed.

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THEY	TWO WEEKS NOTICE	WHITE OLEANDER
P13 11:40,1:40,3:40, 5:40,7:40,9:40	P13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:00	P13 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50
HERO P13 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	**CATCH ME IF YOU CAN** P13 1:00,3:50, 6:40,9:30	**SHANGHAI KNIGHTS** GP 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10

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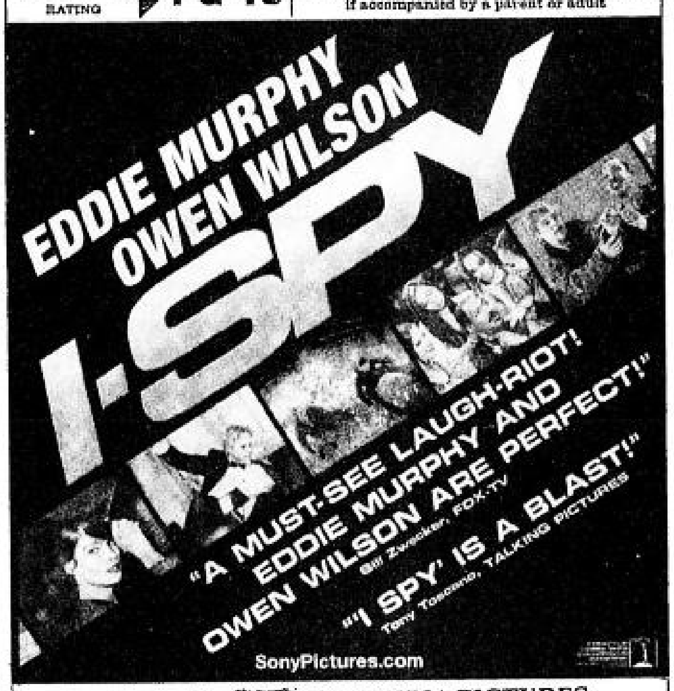

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	AB NORMAL
Ali 2	MAGNIFICO
Ali 3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 4	HERO
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	WHITE OLEANDER
Ali 7	THEY
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	AB NORMAL
Farmers 2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 13	RONAN KEATING CONCERT
FEB 14	SIDE A AND FREESTYLE
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 13	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 14	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 15	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BAKAT / BRAZEN WOMAN
ODEON	BALAT SIBUYAS
ODEON-2	MASARAP ANG UNANG KAGAT / NAIIBANG HAYOP
ROBEN	BALAT SIBUYAS
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY KIDS 2 "MASTER DISGUISE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BETTER THAN SEX
CORONET B	TUXEDO / TEENAGE SEDUCTION
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	BALAT SIBUYAS
REMAR-2	SUKDULAN
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	AB NORMAL
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	I SPY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
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CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
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CINEMA-14	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-15	MAGNIFICO
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
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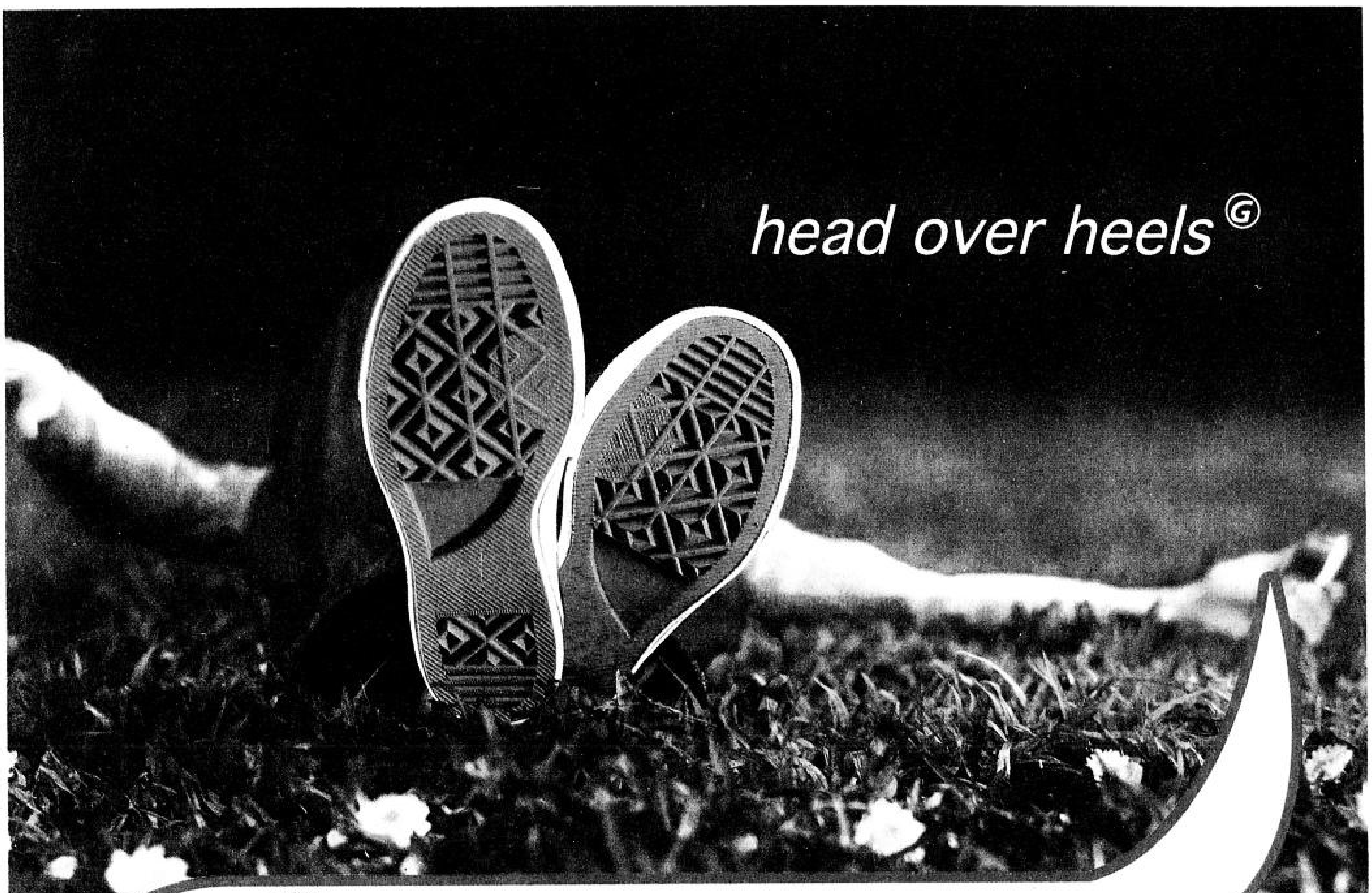
ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

'Chicago' blows wind out of Oscar competition with 13 nominations

/A27

"THE HOURS" AFTER. Australian actress Nicole Kidman, best actress nominee for Stephen Daldry's movie, in a press conference at the Dorchester Hotel in London.



myGlobe tones&icons

Sweep him off his feet with these Valentine picks!

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ICONS

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lovepup luveyes marvin41 marvin42 marvin43
roadru56 romantic slaveluv ughlove wildluv2

TEXT CARDS

daffy36 daffy37 daffy38 dolphluv pepe44
porky30 tweety49 ughlove wile12 pepe45

TONES

SONG TITLE	KEYWORD	ARTIST
ANGEL OF MINE	angelof	MONICA
BACK AT ONE	backat1	BRIAN McKNIGHT
IS IT OKAY IF I CALL YOU MINE	calumine	PAUL McCRANE
I NEED YOU	ineedyou	LEANNE RHYMES
IT MIGHT BE YOU	mightbu	STEPHEN BISHOP
ONLY HOPE	onlyhope	MANDY MOORE
THANK YOU	thankyou	DIDO
THERE YOU'LL BE	thereyou	FAITH HILL
THIS I PROMISE YOU	thispro	*NSYNC
I TURN TO YOU	turntoyu	CHRISTINA AGUILERA

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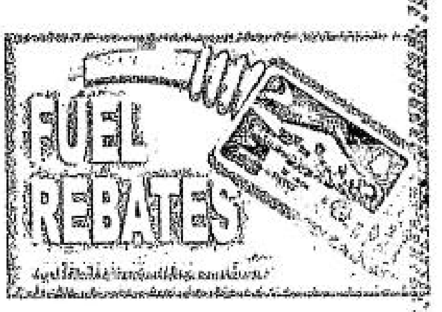

January deficit within target at ₱15B

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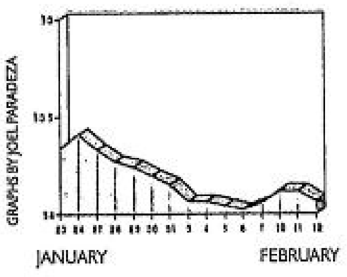

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As of 5 p.m., Feb. 12, 2003

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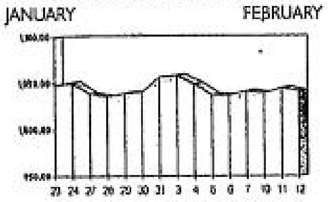
Stocks end shade down

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES backpedaled yesterday after a taped warning allegedly by Osama bin Laden ahead of the key Feb. 14 report by the U.N. inspectors team fueled more anxiety that hostilities may break out soon in Iraq.

Paltry trading volume indicated investors were staying on the sidelines, wary of being caught with huge positions ahead of Friday's U.N. Security Council meeting on Iraq.

Total traded volume stood only at P144.51 million, about half the average daily turnover of around P200-P300 million.

Sluggish trades were likely to continue until Friday, traders said.

"The market is factoring in a war already. What is not factored in is how long it would take," said Allan Araullo, vice president at Regina Capital Development Corp.

The Philippine stock index slid 3.40 points, or 0.33 percent to end at 1,041.37 points, but the market was still up 2.25 percent so far this year.

A recommendation by a consultant to American pension fund Calpers that it drop the Philippines as an emerging market investment also weighed on market sentiment.

Reuters

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT'S budget deficit in January was estimated to have hit P15 billion, or P3 billion higher than December's P12.1 billion but lower by P1 billion than the target for the month.

Government sources said the January deficit could still drop to P13.5 billion if spending would be kept within budget.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin had assured him that spending in January was under control.

In an interview, the budget chief said expenditures of P64.5 billion in January were on track with the program although the amount was higher compared to P62.2 billion a year ago.

On a more conservative estimate, Camacho said the deficit last month should be lower than the P16.8 billion monthly average of the P202-billion programmed shortfall for the year.

"If we divide P202 billion it would yield a monthly average of P16.8 billion. Our goal is to always be below that average so we would meet our annual target. The January deficit should be below that average," the finance chief said.

Camacho said he was not worried that the Bureau of Internal Revenue missed by about P2 billion its P37-billion target in January because other agencies, particularly the Bureau of Customs, had offset the shortfall.

The BIR said it only collected 34.12 billion last month against the target of P37.66 billion.

Customs said it collected P9.6 billion against a target of P7.5 billion while the Bureau of Treasury said it delivered P4.5 billion against a target of P1.5 billion.

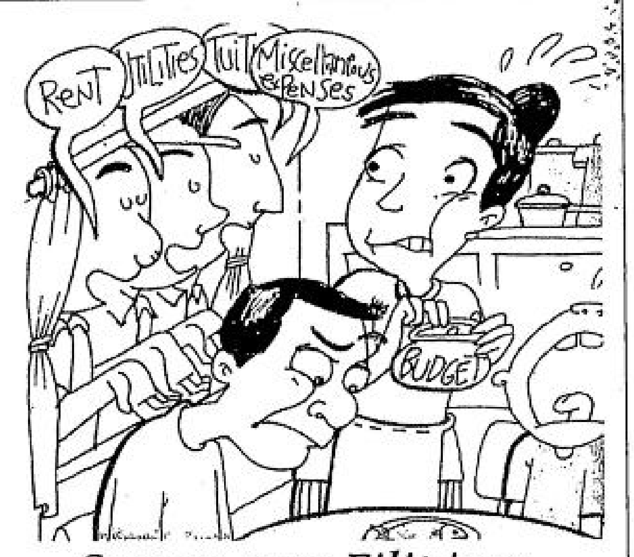
This year, the BIR and Customs must deliver P424 billion and P105.6 billion to help keep the deficit within the target of P202 billion.

Boncodin had vowed to contain spending within this year's program of P786.1 billion.

Meantime, the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday kept overnight rates unchanged as expected despite a weak peso and rising fuel prices.

Monetary authorities believed inflation in the near term remained consistent with the government's outlook of keeping consumer price increases within 4.5 to 5.5 percent this year and 4 to 5 percent in 2004.

With the policy rates at their decade lows of 7 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.25 percent for overnight lending, the central bank observed that the domestic economy had been responding positively as reflected by improved lending activity.



Survey says Filipinos spending less on food

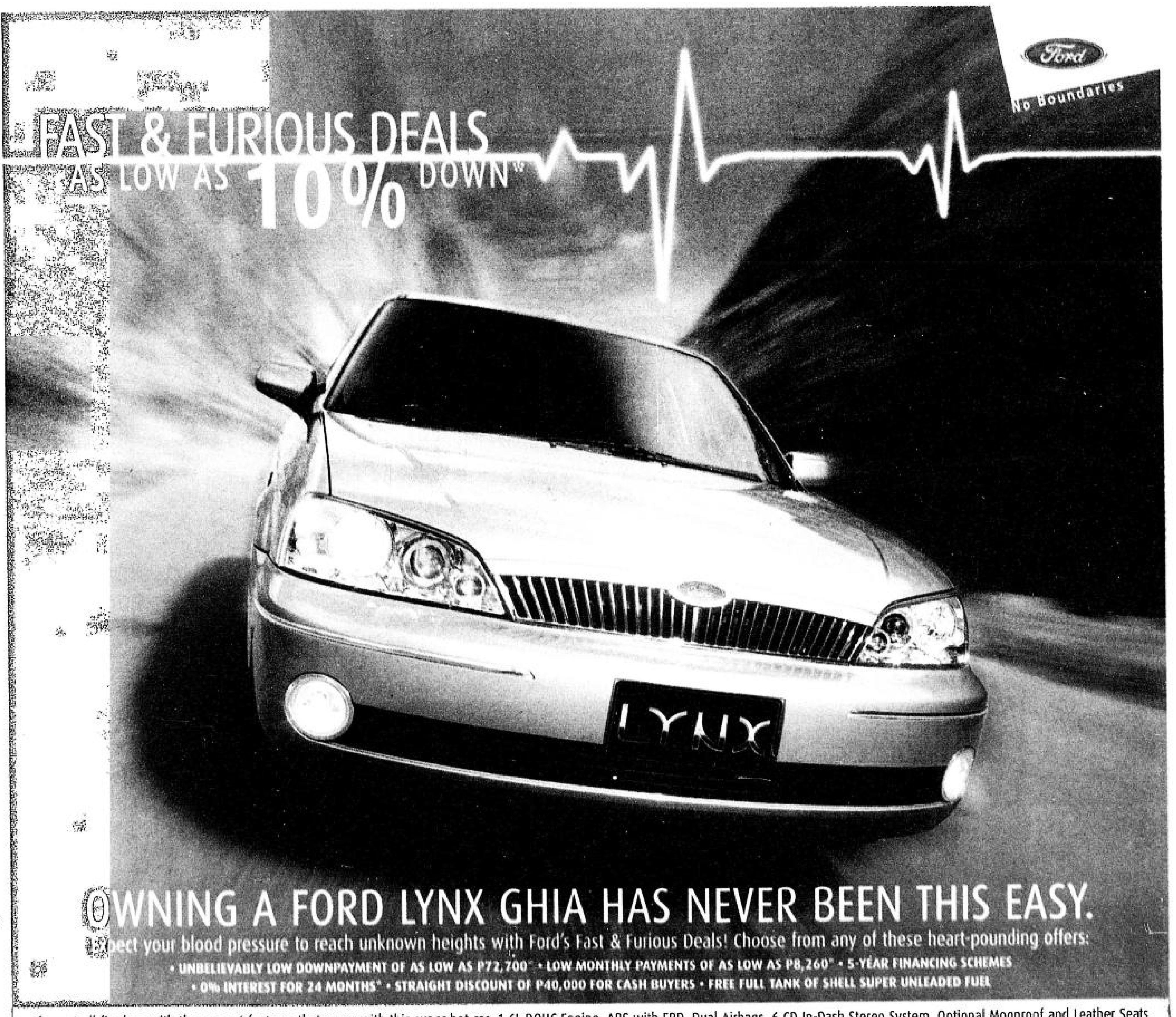
By Doris C. Dumlao

FILIPINOS are now spending less of their household budget for food, especially those consumed at home, according to the latest government poll.

Citing the results of the 2000 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) conducted by the National Statistics Office, the National Economic and Development Authority yesterday reported that a larger share of family expenditures was being earmarked for the payment of rent, transportation and communication, fuel, light and water, education, personal care and effects, clothing, footwear as well as furniture and equipment.

Based on the survey, the total expenditures of Filipinos stood at P1.8 trillion in 2000. The share of

SURVEY/ B3



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Hand in the crook's jar

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

EXPECT heavy traffic at the North Luzon Tollway soon!

But that's not an order from BF. I'm just trying to help the multitude of NLT users. They will probably spend several lifetimes there everyday due to heavy traffic.

Yesterday, the Lopez group's Manila North Tollway Corp., or MNTC, did some ground-breaking rites—that is, not much work but just a lot of boring speeches.

After seven years of trying to hook down the financing, MNTC finally starts its project to upgrade the whole 84-kilometer stretch of the NLT for only $370 million.

That amounts to somewhere between P18 billion and P20 billion, depending on where in the world, or universe, the peso-dollar exchange rate would be, by the time you read this.

* * *

MNTC president Ping de Jesus, the former DPWH boss way before BF came into the picture, tells me that the gestation period of seven years was short.

In other countries, Ping says, similar projects take some 10 years to package. But people hope it will not be another highway robbery.

You know—a la Skyway—which does not even ease the traffic. Forgodsakes, it worsens the traffic. We spend tons of money just to get stuck in traffic. What a life!

Between us girls, in a recent Cabinet meeting, the current DPWH boss, Bayani Fernando, also the MMDA chair, plus a lot of other things, says the project is expensive.

It seems he simply divides the total cost with the number of kilometers, and—presto—there, the Lopezes are caught with their hand in the cookie jar. (Title alarm!)

* * *

I'M sure that BF knows his construction math. Before he became the mayor of Marikina, way before his wife inherited the position from him, he had a huge construction business.

But I think BF is wrong, and I am not saying this just because the Lopezes sent me a yacht yesterday, but because the boat did not even have young nubile starlets on board.

A tollway which is done by a private company is an entirely different story from the ordinary road which is constructed by the DPWH—albeit quite rarely.

A tollway has interchanges, which cost money. For obvious reasons, the private operator also wants a long-lasting road, which DPWH does not bother with—as a rule.

* * *

BUT let's say that you just deduct only the cost of the interchanges and the electronic system, and all the signage, and you do not even consider the quality of the work.

The NLT project comes out cheaper, per kilometer, than most of the DPWH projects. All that is on record. Now, if only I can receive a helicopter . . .

Anyway, from what I gather, by the time the NLT upgrade is done in 2005, or two years from now, its toll will still be lower than the rates at the SLT today.

It makes you wonder just how feasible that Skyway system really is. To begin with, some people doubted its feasibility. But you know how the BOT actually works.

* * *

BY the way, I thought you might want to listen to—of all people—Sen. Vicente Sotto III, or "Tito" to the fans, but without Vic and Joey, talking about anti-money laundering.

The comedian says that, in its watchlist, the new bill is zeroing in on politicians and public figures. He does not like it. He only wants drug lords and such in the list.

Precisely, Elvis, if you ask the people, that is the whole point. The law should make it hard even for politicos, or more so the politicos, to wash their dirty money.

It is not funny anymore, but in his fight against the new bill, Tito also talks something about ... well, "public interest." I'm filled with gratitude, boss!

I don't know about you, but I'm not sure that I want this comedian to protect my interest in whatever way. I do recall a big issue on his alleged link with a drug lord.

People I talked to, thus, cannot help but think that certain politicos also have their hand in the crook's jar. There—are you happy now?

* * *

BUT back to the forthcoming heavy traffic at the NLT, I can almost hear BF apologizing to us for the ... well, "inconvenience."

If BF calls three hours of getting stuck in traffic, which does not move at all, as an inconvenience, what does he call a transport strike—just a little "flat tire?"

Bus operators in Metro Manila threaten to go on strike. They are up against the plan of BF to impose the odd-even scheme on buses which are plying the Edsa route.

Based on his own assessment, although nobody knows if it was based on an actual scientific study, we are using only 50 percent of the bus capacity on Edsa.

But the question is, in the first place, how come Edsa has so many buses? How come the LTFRB, the Land Transportation Franchise Regu-

BREAKTIME/B3

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Firm sets P1.35-B plastics project in Bataan

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A PHILIPPINE plastics maker owned by businessman Ramon Garcia is spending P1.35 billion to put up a packaging factory inside the Plastic Processing Center Special Economic Zone in Mariveles, Bataan.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority Director General Lilia B. de Lima said her agency has granted economic incentives to Modern Packaging Films Inc. which made it eligible for tax- and duty-free perks and four-year income tax holiday.

Modern Packaging will produce bi-axially oriented co-extruded polypropylene (BOPP) and non-oriented co-extruded polypropylene (CPP) and their metal variants. BOPP and CPP films are used in packing various types of food products such as confectionery, dried food, dairy products, drinks, ice cream and snacks to lengthen their shelf life.

The metal films are used as barrier materials to protect food and other products from contact with oxygen and gases and exposure to moisture and light. Non-food product that use these packaging materials are stationery, soap, single use medical packs, and tobacco bundle wrap.

Modern Packaging will lease out an 8,440-square-meter factory building from the Diversified Plastic Film Systems Inc., the owner-developer of the Plastic Processing Center.

Modern Packaging plans to start commercial operations for the CPP line and metal films in early 2004 and BOPP films by January 2005. The firm has already started the importation of machinery and equipment for the project as well as hiring and training of its initial workforce.

The project is being made at a time when the government has decided to extend the protection on all finished plastic products.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, February 12, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	9,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	34.5	34.5	34	34.5	613,400
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26	25.5	25.5	3,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30	30	29	29	14,900
Philippine National Bank	27	27	27	27	400
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	11,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	10,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	150,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	220	220	220	40
Manulife Financial Corp.	1210	1210	1205	1205	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	935	940	935	940	1,260
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	12	12	6,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	4,270,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	5,000,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	292.5	300	292.5	297.5	182,990
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	4,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	16,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	942,400
Petron Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	286,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.56	350,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	192,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	120,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17	16.75	16.75	54,200
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	1,700
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56.5	55.5	56.5	192,600
San Miguel Corp. B	64	64	63.5	64	146,800
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	29,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.25	4.3	2,119,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.32	2.34	2.32	2.34	147,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	70,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2	2	2	2	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	5,420,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	2,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	91,000
Ionics Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,060,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	160,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	700,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.14	0.14	7,920,000
Music Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.17	1,820,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	8,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	100,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	20,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	130,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
Manila Jockey Club	8	8	8	8	3,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	48,300
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	7,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10	10	17,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.95	1,559,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	1,106,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	120,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	850,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	14,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,700,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Mln. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	6,000,000

Survey says Filipinos ...

From page B1

food spending in the total declined to 43.6 percent from the 44.2 percent in the previous survey held in 1997.

The FIES survey further revealed that the Filipino spending pattern on food consumed at home compared to food consumed outside was likewise changing.

Food consumed at home decreased from 39.5 percent of total spending budget in the 1997 survey to 38.7 percent in 2000, while food consumed outside the home increased to 5 percent in 2000 from 4.7 percent in 1997, the Neda noted.

The recently completed 2000 FIES is the main source of government data on family income and expenditures, including the levels of consumption by item expenditure as well as sources of income in cash and in kind.

The government comes up with this nationwide household-based survey once every three years to help policymakers and planners assess the quality of life and spending behavior of Filipinos. The results are likewise used to estimate the poverty threshold and to project consumer demand for the purpose of making marketing plans and strategies by the private sector.

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Telegraph and Telephone Corp. denied having any information that could explain the 40-percent drop in its share price that fell from P0.15 to P0.09 per share.

* * *

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp. announced that its compliance officer is Diosdado Valdez who is also the company's head of corporate management services.

* * *

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc. declared cash dividends of P0.375 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Feb. 28 and will be payable on March 24. Also, the company will hold its regular stockholders' meeting on May 6, 2 p.m. with record date on March 14 to determine stockholders entitled to vote.

* * *

THE DECREASE in the par value of **AJO.Net Holdings Inc.**'s par value from P1 to P0.10 per share will be reflected in the Philippine Stock Exchange's computer system on March 3.

* * *

GLOBE Telecom Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 1, 9 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 12 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

Feb. 12, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.931012	1.000000	53.920000
Japan	Yen	0.007699	0.008270	0.445900
United Kingdom	Pound	1.507681	1.619400	87.318000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119372	0.128218	6.913500
Switzerland	Franc	0.681262	0.731743	39.455600
Canada	Dollar	0.608982	0.654108	35.269500
Singapore	Dollar	0.530854	0.570190	30.744600
Australia	Dollar	0.547719	0.588305	31.721400
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.469593	2.652590	143.027700
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.248283	0.266681	14.379400
Brunei	Dollar	0.529345	0.568569	30.657200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021626	0.023229	1.252500
UAE	Dirham	0.253509	0.272294	14.682100
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.074100	57.915500
Argentina	Peso	0.302276	0.324675	17.506500
Brazil	Real	0.261888	0.281294	15.167400
Denmark	Kroner	0.134538	0.144507	7.791800
India	Rupee	0.019551	0.021000	1.132300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.245036	0.263193	14.191400
Mexico	New Peso	0.084880	0.091170	4.915900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.509920	0.547705	29.532300
Norway	Kroner	0.133934	0.143858	7.756800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016135	0.017331	0.934500
South Africa	Rand	0.111100	0.119332	6.434400
Korea	Won	0.000775	0.000832	0.044900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109094	0.117178	6.318200
Syria	Pound	0.022167	0.023810	1.283800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026900	0.028893	1.557900
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000485	0.000521	0.028100

Breaktime

From page B2

latory Board, allowed them?

Now is BF saying that the board is not doing its job? As I understand it, BF did even consult with LTFRB chair Dante Lantin. *Ah, kalabitin mo nga ang ... tenga.*

* * *

ONLY recently, the Lopez group also inaugurated the 500-megawatt natural gas power plant in Batangas. The money-troubled group must be on a roll.

Well, through that San Lorenzo power plant, the Lopez group played the biggest local role in the $4.5-billion Malampaya gas project.

That is, the biggest role, of course, aside from that of the government, which actually invested nothing in the project, but it gets a lot of money out of it, because it owns the gas.

Anyway, Oscar Lopez, chair of First Gas Power Corp., which owns the San Lorenzo plant, waxed nostalgic during the inauguration.

He called it the "second epoch" in the Lopez group's involvement in energy. Of course, the first epoch was Meralco, which is the all-time favorite of the Supreme Court.

* * *

THIS "over-charging" Meralco, which was what the Supreme Court ruled, went under the control of the Lopez group more than 40 years ago.

Oscar called those years, or from the time his father bought out the Americans in Meralco until Kokoy's group took it away during Martial Law, as Meralco's "golden age."

Meralco put up power plants every 18 months at that time, and in just 10 years, its generation capacity went up more than five times.

Here, to me, was the actual feat: Meralco never borrowed a single centavo with government guarantee, whether direct or indirect, with or without DOJ opinion.

But even then Meralco became the country's biggest business in only four years. It grew without stealing from us.

You know what—at that time, before the government ruined Meralco, it charged one of the lowest rates in the world, lower than the rates in all Asia, even lower than those in some parts of the United States.

Now if only I can get a nice little Rolls Royce for my birthday ...

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

Invites reliable, long-term business partners for its nationwide agriculture-based corporate social responsibility program that will harness at least one million hectares of farmlands and create new jobs and livelihood opportunities.

We are looking for:

1. Contract farmers/growers for cassava, corn, soybeans, livestock, poultry, hogs and aquaculture, having an area of at least 20 hectares. Applications should contain these minimum documents:
    - Area size/particular commodity venture
    - Farm location/vicinity map
    - Articles of Incorporation (for corporations/cooperatives)
    - List of proponents
    - Farm facilities/improvements
2. Processors/suppliers of glutenmeal/corn bran/corn starch/sugar/soy meal/copra cake. Applicants should indicate the commodities they process/supply, and submit their plant layout, capacity and tolling rates.
3. Transport contractors for the above raw materials (truckers/bargers/trampers/shippers). Applications should include the number of service providers' units and make of vehicles, route of operations and service rates.

Proposals may be in any, a combination of, or all of the above requirements. Interested parties, either individuals, cooperatives or corporations, may send proposals and contact addresses to:

SMC Agribusiness
P.O. Box 271 Manila

Six Machine | the V6 X-Type.

V6 engines as standard
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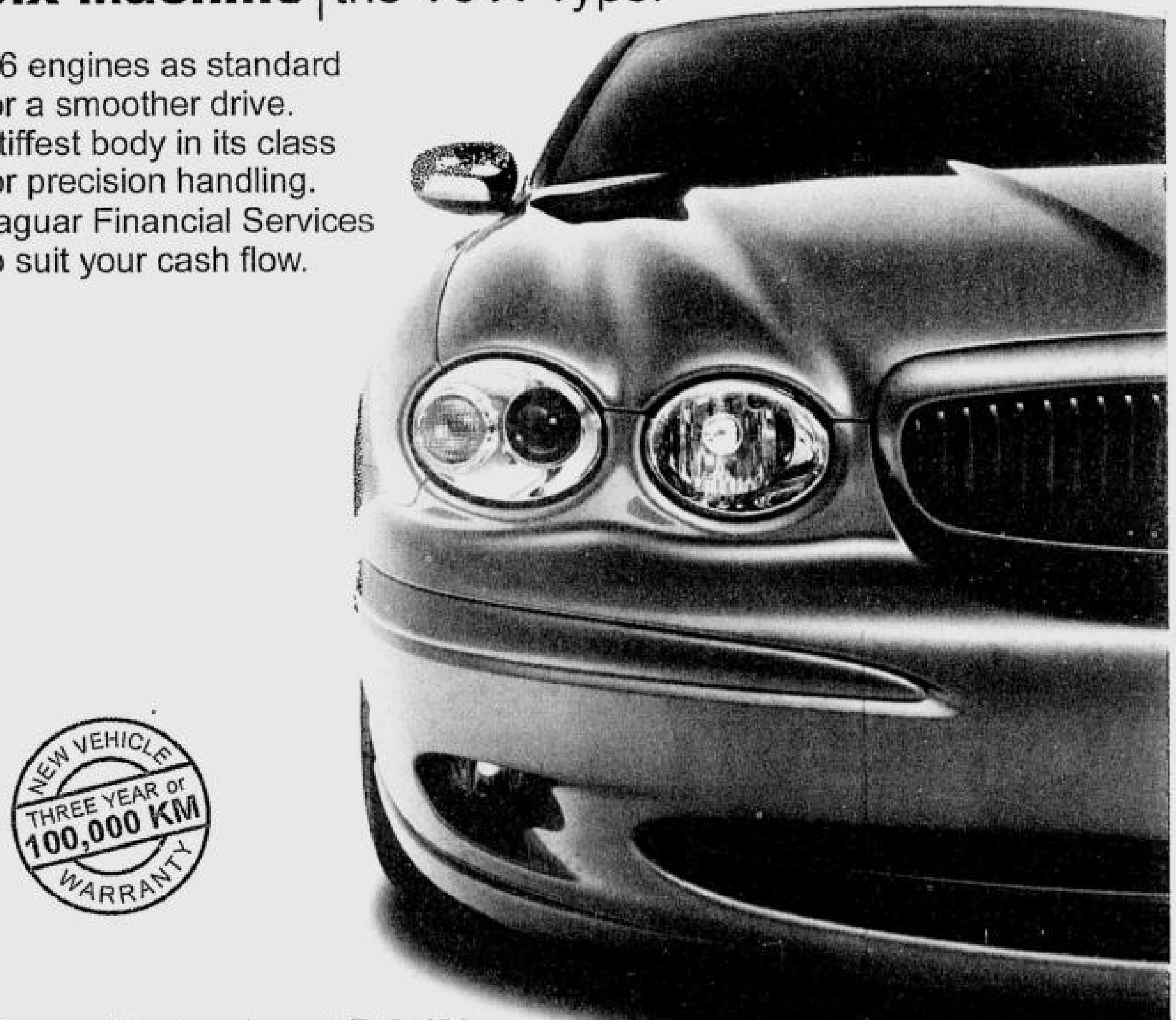

Ownership begins at **P 2.1M**
Jaguar Finance starts at **P 26,214/mo.***
Semestral and Quarterly Payment Plans also available

*P 26,214 net monthly amortization for 60 months on V6 X-Type 2.0 Classic model with SRP of P2,100,000 and 50% DP.
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People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

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Children's Hour's 1st Mass Turn Over of Donations 2002-2003

FEBRUARY is a month of love and giving. Last February 10, a pre-Valentine gift giving to Children's Hour (CH) in the 1st Mass Turn Over of Donations was held at 9501 Restaurant, 14th Floor of the ELJ Communication Center in Quezon City. Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III graciously welcomed the Steering Committee and the participating companies in the turnover.

In one day, a total of 37 companies turned over their donations and pledges amounting to P5.2M. The Steering Committee, chaired by Mr. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, was very happy with the results and expressed their immense gratitude towards all those who participated.

Aside from hosting that day's ceremonies, Lopez also presented the donations of the company and employees of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation, ABS-CBN Foundation, and First Philippines Holdings Corporation. Other companies include TVP Dental B, who donated cash, 5,000 toothbrushes, and pledged to conduct quarterly health missions to CH partner institutions.

Instead of giving corporate gifts last Christmas, Intex Asia, Wireless Asia, Phinma Group, Shindengen Phils., and General Milling Corporate gave the equivalent of the cost to CH.

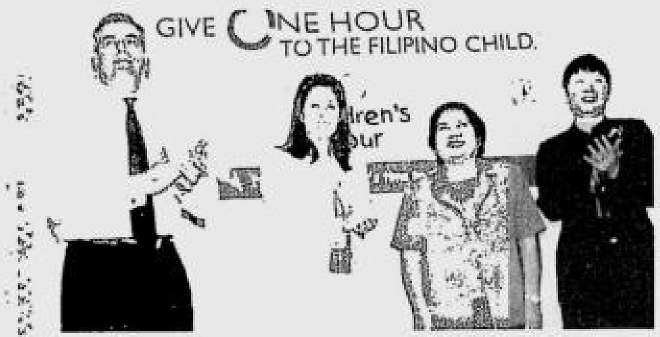
Ayala Companies showed their support. Globe Telecom will continue its Text 4D Children until April 2003. Also present are the Ayala Business Club-Western Visayas, Ayala Land Inc., Makati Development Corp., Ayala Aviation Corp., Ayala Systems Technology, Inc., Ayala Aon Risk Services, Inc.

In the academe, Miriam College, a member of the Consortium of Women's Colleges, spearheaded the launch of the campaign in all units of the school. Assumption also confirmed their participation to support CH.

To date, the committee is screening 52 grant applications for beneficiaries from all over the country. Announcement of approved beneficiaries of this year's campaign will be on May 15, 2003.

With this 1st mass turn over, the committee is hoping that these partner companies are setting an example to encourage more companies and individuals to get involved in creating a better future for our children.

On Valentine's day, participating restaurants Africana, Afrodisia Grill, Beluga and Pravda, Bistro Remedios, Burgoo, Café Adriatico, Café Havana, Cibo, Cork, Ebun, Figaro (Powerplant), In the Mood Ballroom, Kitchen, Magnum, Mangan, Milky Way Café, and Mil Novicientos. For more information on how to be a part of CH, call the secretariat at 894-1663.



CH Steercom Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Susana Madrigal, Cora Alma De Leon and Vicky Garchitorena.

Representing the ABS-CBN family are chairman Eugenio Lopez III (center) and human resources council chairman Cedie Lopez-Vargas (3rd from the right)

Philippine Daily Inquirer, represented by AVP for Marketing and Classifieds Donald Lim (2nd from right) and Marketing Officer Hazel Soriaga (3rd from left), turnover the proceeds from the Robinson's Movieworld premiere of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* last December.

ONE HOUR
TO THE FILIPINO CHILD.
children's
hour

Napoleon's Children's Apparel president and chief executive officer Robert Uy (2nd from right) turns over his company's donations to Children's Hour. Also representing Napoleon is Mildred de Castro (far right).

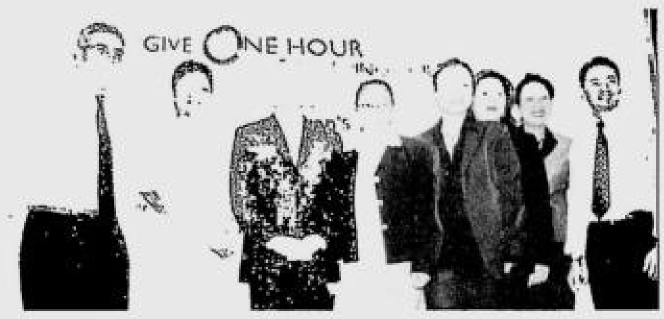
With JAZA are Philippine Star corporate communications manager Joy Sarmiento and account supervisor Ava Filemon.

The steering committee pose with Hotel Inter-Continental Manila general manager Stefan Voogel (3rd from right), human resources and training director Grace Camagay (4th from left) and Ayala Hotels Inc. chief operating officer Costas Vafopoulos (far right).

HSBC president Warner Manning (Far left) presents his unusual weight-loss scheme for Children's Hour. With him are JAZA, Emily Abrera, Hanita Sy, and Patricia Licuanan.

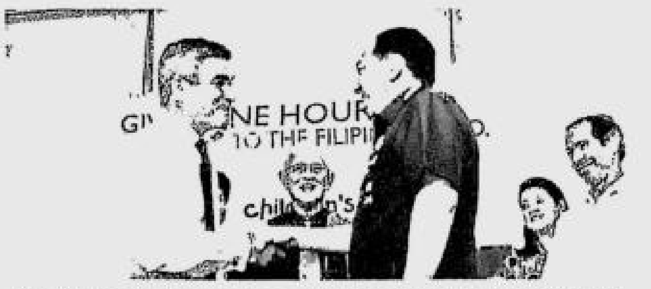
General Milling Corp,'s HR Manager Jun Reyes with CH Steercom.

The cadets of the Philippine Military Acedemy, represented by 1st Class Cadet Filemon Tan and Lt. Col. Peñafiel, hands over their donations.



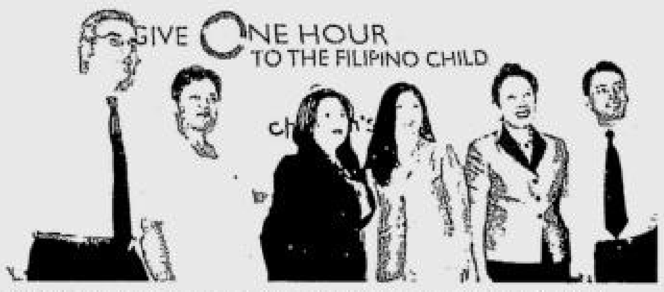
(Starting from 3rd left) Holiday Inn's GM Bill Vincent, PR and Communications head Kit Trajano, and HR Manager Dina Esperidion.

The steering committee pose with Central Azucarera Don Pedro vice president for human resources Atty. Rafael Francisco and Roxas Gargollo Foundation executive director Roy Luntayao.



Armed Forces of the Philippines – Philippine Army's Inspector General Brig. Gen. Froilan Maglaya (3rd from right)

Philippine National Police's Police Senior Superintendent Rodolfo Sebastian.

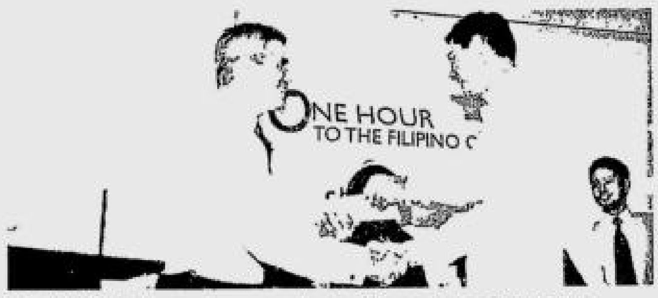


Globe Telecommunications vice president for corporate marketing and Touch Mobile Ana Singson (3rd from right) pose with the steering committee members.

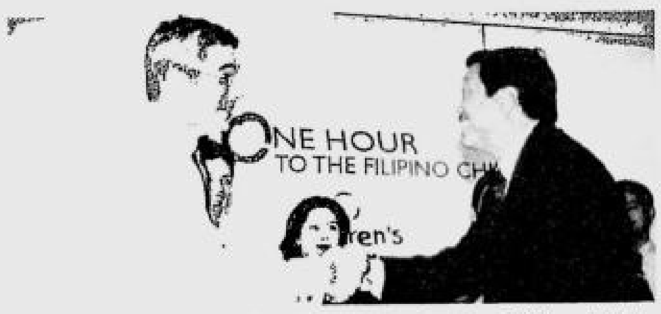
Enchanted Kingdom's Vice President for marketing and business development Dennis Cruz turnsover the company donation to CH.

In photo are Ayala Land, Inc. vice president Marivic Añonuevo and manager for compensation Primitivo Cabral.

Oakwood general manager Stefan Voogel.



Manila Water's human resources director Ramon de Leon turns over employees' donations.



Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala (Left) with Finex President Ed Limon (right) on behalf of FINEX members.

Globe Quest marketing manager Raquel Cagwangan shakes the hand of JAZA.

Agriculture chief again takes aim at Australia's trade policy

By Christine A. Gaylican

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. has again criticized Australia for failing to reciprocate the Philippines' efforts to open its doors to products from Australia.

"We have been very accommodating, bending over backwards to address your trade concerns, but how about our trade concerns? Why can't Australia reciprocate and open its doors for more equitable trade?" Lorenzo said in a speech before the Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Lorenzo said it was ironic that Australia should again seek the support of the Cairns Group, one of the world's most influential lobby groups for free trade in agriculture, while putting up trade barriers against one of its members.

The Philippines is a charter member of the Cairns Group.

The Cairns Group is generally regarded as the "little guy's" club in the business of world trade, as it serves as a powerful lobby on the side of the World Trade Organization's "underdogs."

The 18-nation bloc was named after the Australian city where it was formed in 1986. It came into play during the WTO's Doha conference in Qatar last year.

The Cairns Group promotes the interests of big farm-exporting countries, hoping to free up trade of farm produce.

In many of its appearances, especially in Doha, the Cairns Group has lined up against the European Union, the United States and Japan on farm subsidies.

The group's members—Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Paraguay and South Africa—account for more than 30 percent of global agricultural trade.

"Here we have Australian trade minister, Mark Vaile, eliciting support from the member countries of the Cairns Group so that it can pursue trade issues before the WTO. Yet, it is doing exactly what the other members are complaining about more developed countries of the WTO," Lorenzo said in his criticism of Australia's refusal to open its market to Philippine fruits.

Had Australia been more reciprocal, he said, government projections show local banana exports to Australia alone can generate A$300 million yearly.

"We have the option of bringing our case to the WTO through the dispute settlement panel, and we will resort to this if we cannot get an assurance from Australia that it is willing to start a dialogue and that reforms in their trade relations will be achieved," he said.

For nearly a decade, the Philippines has been battling Australia's continued use of non-tariff barriers, such as sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, to ban the entry of local produce, particularly fruits like pineapple and banana.

The Department of Agriculture is confident of getting a favorable ruling from the WTO if the Philippines decides to step up its campaign to force Australia to open its market.

LORENZO: Why can't Australia reciprocate?

"The momentum is with us. We have a strong case that has the potential of dealing their import regime on fruits and vegetables inconsistent with WTO rules," Agriculture Assistant Secretary Segfredo Serrano said.

Tibayan a no show at pyramiding hearing

THE HEAD of the Tibayan group of companies failed to show up during a government-scheduled hearing yesterday, disappointing hundreds of investors who were hoping to recover money stuck with the fraud-marred group.

Securities and Exchange Commission director Jose Tomas Syquia told reporters that hundreds of investors trooped to the SEC building to see Jesus Tibayan, whom the SEC summoned to answer allegations that he defrauded his investors.

Tibayan did not show up or sent any representatives to explain why he failed to attend the hearing.

Syquia said should Tibayan refuse to cooperate with the SEC, the compliance and enforcement department would recommend that a cease-and-desist order issued against the Tibayan group be made permanent.

The commission had yet to release a figure on the amount of investments that the Tibayan group solicited before it was shut down.

The Philippine Stock Exchange earlier banned the trading of shares held by the Tibayan group in Prudential Bank,

SEC records show Tibayan has bought about 700,000 shares of Prudential Bank amounting to about P600 million through the following companies: TG Investment Co. Inc., Tibayan Management Group International Holdings Co. Ltd. and Cielo Azul Holdings Corp.

The SEC shut down the Tibayan group for its alleged involvement in a fraudulent scheme. *Michelle V. Remo*

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Hong Kong shirt company opens in Clark

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—A Hong Kong garments company manufacturing high-end labels for Nautica, Liz Clairbourne and Ralph Lauren opened Wednesday at the Philexcel Business Park here.

Now the biggest locator at Philexcel, Smart Shirts Philippines joined 36 other investors from the Philippines, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan and the United Kingdom, according to Jerry Rhodes, the firm's vice president for finance.

He said Smart Shirts would produce 3.6 million shirts this year alone.

The company has hired 2,000 employees for its operations here.

Rhodes gave Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and Israeli Ambassador Irit Ben-Abba, guests at the inauguration, a tour of the production center.

Wrinkle-free garments, to be distributed in Bloomingdales, Sears and other American stores, will be made from the "highly sophisticated" equipment and operation in the garment industry, Rhodes said.

Officials of the Philexcel, founded in 1992 by the late Israeli honorary consul Jack Nasser, gave Smart Shirts a grand opening to announce the development of the park's second phase.

Ariella Nasser, Nasser's widow, appointed the international property group Colliers Jardine to manage the 52-hectare park leased from the Clark Development Corp. for 75 years.

"Under the professional management of Colliers Jardine, Philexcel provides value-added services by advising the locators on documentation requirements and tax and duty benefits available within Clark," said Ariella Nasser. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

WG&A reports 27% hike in unaudited net income

WILLIAM Gothong and Aboitiz Inc. has posted an unaudited net income after tax of P416 million, 27 percent lower than the previous year's P572 million.

In a disclosure, WG&A said the company's unaudited net revenue for 2002 was at P7.1 billion, 5 percent higher than the 2001 figure.

The growth in revenues, the company said, was attributed to the higher volume of passengers and the higher rates per passenger.

The higher revenue, however, was offset by higher costs of vessel operations, which included cost of repair and maintenance, insurance and "upgrading of the company's operating systems."

The company also disclosed that it would be launching two new vessels, called the SF15 and SF16, within the first quarter of this year.

It said the vessels would help "modernize passenger and cargo services in the country."

Each ship, the company added, has a capacity of 1,930 passengers, 210 twenty-foot equivalent units of containerized cargo and 60 cars.

The company also said the two new vessels were expected to spur economic activity as they would contribute to cost-effective movement of goods to and from the different places in the country.

Samsung aims for No. 2 spot in cell phone market

By Abigail L. Ho

SAMSUNG Electronics Philippines Inc. is aiming for the No. 2 slot in the Philippine mobile phone market with revenues of around P4 billion by year's end.

In a news briefing yesterday, Samsung president and chief executive Sang Youl Eom disclosed that his company generated P2 billion in revenues from cellular phones last year with more than 150,000 handsets sold.

"This year, we are targeting a 50-percent growth in handset sales and a 100-percent increase in revenues. We're not pessimistic even with the possibility of a war," he said.

He said the local mobile handset market was still growing, and that the cellular subscribers' thirst for new models would continue to lift growth in sales despite an uncertain economic environment.

Samsung currently has a 10-percent share of the mobile phone pie.

"Right now, we only have a 10-percent market share. That means we still have a lot of potential market that we can cultivate. The innovative features of our phones ensure that our competitiveness," he said.

Shemberg targets new applications for seaweed

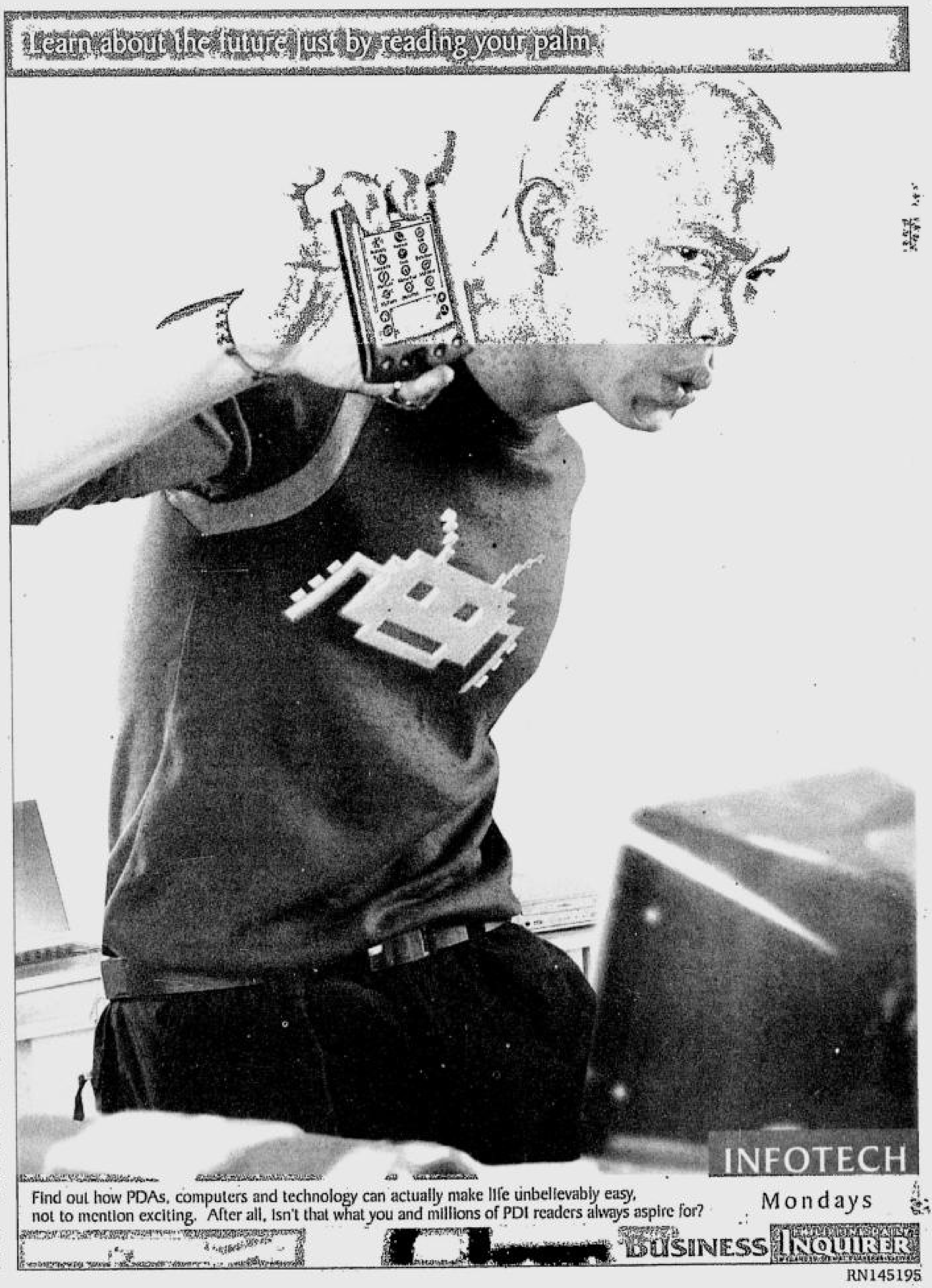
CEBU-BASED seaweed exporter Shemberg Marketing Corp. is looking at non-traditional carrageenan-based products to expand its market worldwide.

Shemberg marketing and product development director Gary Durga said in a news briefing that the company was currently setting its sights on potential new applications for carageenan, especially in the area of oral care, pharmaceuticals and personal care.

"The company has to explore other possible realm of applications aside from our regular carrageenan-based lines to get ahead of our competitors. The most promising areas right now are in pharmaceuticals, oral care and personal care products including edible films," Durga said.

Carrageenan is derived from seaweeds and is used as an additive to food products and as binders and gelling agents for a wide range of products such as processed meat, pet food, gum candies and medicines.

Durga said Shemberg was now negotiating with several transnational pharmaceutical companies.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CENTRAL PROJECT OFFICE

DAR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), has received an ODA Loan from JAPAN BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (hereinafter referred to as JBIC) towards the cost of Mindanao Sustainable Settlement Area Development (MINSSAD) Project, and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan in the total amount of five million pesos (PhP5,000,000.00) to payments under the contract of procurement of equipment.

The DAR, Foreign-Assisted Projects Office (FAPsO), Pre-qualifications, Bids and Award Committee (PBAC) is inviting contractors to pre-qualify and bid for the following equipment:

LOT I: OFFICE EQUIPMENT

52 units of desktop personal computer
2 units of Laptop Computer
4 units of LCD Projector
24 units of Digital Camera
5 units of Digital Duplicator
1 unit of Fax Machine
16 units of Overhead Projector
16 sets of Audio/Video equipment

LOT II: FURNITURE & FIXTURES

32 units of Filing Cabinet
32 units of White Board
32 units of Office Table
32 units of Clerical Swivel Chair
80 units of Work Table
800 units of Mono Block Chairs

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as the Government of the Philippines-Department of Agrarian Reform, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC:

1. will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
2. will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it at any time determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.

Interested eligible parties are invited to apply for eligibility and to submit sealed bids using Two Envelope System.

- List of eligibility requirements shall be available for issuance on February 4-14, 2003.
- Closing date and time for submission of eligibility requirements shall be on February 17, 2003, 5:00 P.M., Manila Time.
- Letter of Notice to Prospective Bidders shall be issued on February 20, 2003.
- Bid Documents shall be issued to Pre-Qualified Bidders on February 21-25, 2003, upon presentation of a valid Notification Letter and payment of a non-refundable fee of two thousand pesos (P2,000).
- Closing Date and Time of submission of bids is March 14, 2003 at 9:00 A.M. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the participating bidders on the same day at 10:00 A.M.

All documents pertaining to the tender are available at DAR-FAPsO, Administrative Unit, 2nd Floor, FAPsO Building, Department of Agrarian Reform, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

The DAR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **JOSE MARI B. PONCE**
Assistant Secretary, SSO and
Executive Director, FAPsO

Inquirer–Feb. 4 & 14, 2003

PEZA
Republic of the Philippines
Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Roxas Boulevard cor. San Luis St.,
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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **KYUSHU MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (KMECP)** with plant site at the Carmelray Industrial Park II - Special Economic Zone (CIP II-SEZ) has filed with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) an application for **PIONEER STATUS** to be granted to its production of slim CD-R/RW drive and slim DVD combination drive based on newness of product and technology, which if approved, will entitle the company to six (6) years of Income Tax Holiday. Said application has been officially accepted and is under process in this office.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file with the PEZA his/her objections in writing and under oath, within fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication.

Please direct your position papers/comments to the Enterprise Regulations Department of PEZA [Tel. Nos. 551-9544 and 551-3457; and telefax 551-3456].

(Sgd.) **LILIA B. DE LIMA**
Director General

(PDI - Feb 13, 2003)

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Message of Thanks

OUR MOST SINCERE GRATITUDE

To all who visited us and condoled with us
in our time of sorrow.

To all who sent mass cards, messages of sympathy
and flowers to express compassion
and condolence
To all who joined in our nightly vigils,
attended masses and funeral rites

To all who thought of us in our hour of grief and
grave words to console our hearts.

From the family of the late

ZORAIDA SISON NAVAL

Who peacefully joined our Lord
on February 2, 2003
Biñan, Laguna

"Kindness and faithful love pursue me everyday of my life. I make my home in Yahweh for all time to come." — **(Ps. 23:6)**

Ramon Jaime Vila Birosel

was called to a life of eternal happiness with the Lord on February 11, 2003 at the age of 55. In Him he has joined rest and the fullness of love forever.

His beloved wife **Maria Filomena**; father **Rufino** (†); mother **Lourdes**; brothers and sisters and their spouses **Crisanto, Antonio** and **Rose, Beatrice** and **Antonio Berango, Jesus** and **Anita, David** and **Marilou**, and **Marissa**; his brothers and sisters-in-law; nephews and nieces request those whose lives he touched to remember him in their prayers with love and thanksgiving.

He lies in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment will be on Saturday, February 15, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass at Santa Maria Della Strada Church, Katipunan, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

AUREA BALAGOT CLEMENS

of South San Francisco, California and Baguio City
was born to eternal life on February 4, 2003.

Her bereaved husband **Lieurance V. Clemens**; sister **Ester Balagot Follosco**; brother **Alberto M. Balagot**; brother-in-law **David Clemens**; nephews, nieces, grandnieces, grandnephews, other relatives and close friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

MEMORIAL SERVICES will be held at ALL SOULS CATHOLIC CHURCH, South San Francisco, California, U.S.A. on February 15, 2003 at 9:30 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

Her ashes will temporarily remain at the family residence and will be transferred at a later date to Baguio Cemetery.

"One thing
I ask of the Lord;
this I seek:
to dwell in the
Lord's house
all the days
of my life..."

Psalm 27:4

In Loving Memory

DR. PEREGRIN P. DE GUZMAN

27 APRIL 1911 - 19 FEBRUARY 1969

CATALINA TINIO-DE GUZMAN

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Mass Schedule: 13 February and 19 February 2003

Cabanatuan City:

St. Nicolas of Tolentine Cathedral	6:00 AM
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Monastery	6:30 AM
St. Nicolas of Tolentine Cathedral Lakewood	6:30 AM
The Good Samaritan College Cmpd.	8:00 AM
Dambana ng Ina ng Laging Saklolo	5:30 PM
Christ the King, Greenmeadows, Q.C.	7:00 AM/6:00 PM
Sanctuario de San Antonio, FP, Makati	6:15 AM
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, S.J.	7:15 AM/6:15 PM

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HILARIA B. BRINGAS

of Bangued, Abra and Fairview, Quezon City

January 14, 1928 – February 11, 2003

peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 75.

Her bereaved sisters **Annie** and **Ese**; nephews, nieces, grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains now lie in state at the family residence, No. 37 Iceland St., East Fairview, Quezon City, and will be transferred to her hometown, Bangued, Abra on February 13, 11:00 p.m.

Interment will be on Monday, February 17, 2003 at Bangued Cemetery after the 7:00 a.m. Mass.

"My soul, be at rest in God alone from whom comes my hope." **Psalm 62:6.**

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11 February 2003

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Bidder's Bond is required equivalent 2.5% of Bid in Cash/Manager's Check/GSIS Surety (original).

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For more information, please see or call the BUDGET DIVISION, 2nd Floor, Insurance Commission, United Nations Avenue, Manila at 524-6097.

Interested bidders may acquire the PREQUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS from the 17th of February 2003 until the 19th of February 2003 at the same office between 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. only. The submission of prequalification documents shall be on or before the **25th of February 2003 by 5:00 p.m.** at the said office. Only prequalified bidders will be informed in writing to purchase the REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL/TERMS OF REFERENCE for the computing requirements of the agency.

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P5.2M in an hour for Children's Hour campaign

By Celine R. Madamba

WHOEVER thought it would be impossible to raise P5.2 million in an hour, think again.

During a recent mass turnover of donations, more than 35 companies and organizations donated over P5.2 million (P3.7 million in cash and P1.5 million in pledges) for the benefit of children and youth causes supported by the Children's Hour campaign. The one-hour event was led by the Children's Hour steering committee headed by chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II and hosted by ABS-CBN head Eugenio Lopez III at the 9501 Restaurant in Quezon City.

Since its launch in 1999, Children's Hour has raised over P30 million for preventive and rehabilitative services, temporary shelter, feeding programs and education for more than 88,000 children and youth nationwide. Since its re-launch in August 2002, Children's Hour has again mobilized the support of over 100 organizations to its cause by calling on individuals and companies to donate an hour's worth of earnings.

Present at the turnover ceremonies were representatives from big business, hotels, banks, government agencies, restaurants, telecommunication companies, media groups and other industries that have pledged their support to the campaign. The companies included ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., ABS-CBN Foundation, Ayala Aon Risk Services Inc., Ayala Aviation Corp., Ayala Business Club Western Visayas, Ayala Land Inc., Ayala Systems Technology Inc., Central Azucarera de San Pedro, First Philippine Holdings, Holiday Inn Manila, Hotel InterContinental Manila, Makati Development Corp., Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Pilipino Star Ngayon and Robinson's Movieworld.

Creative initiatives

Apart from straight donations, funds were also raised through various creative initiatives. The INQUIRER, together with Robinson's Movieworld, donated proceeds from a movie premier of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" in December. Pure Concepts and Events Inc., which held a tradeshow in Megamall, donated half of the entrance fees and a percentage of their solicitations from sponsors. They also treated out 50 children from Children's Hour beneficiary institutions.

TVP Dental B not only donated cash but also 5,000 toothbrushes and pledged to conduct quarterly health missions for Children's Hour partner institutions.

Intex Asia and Wireless Asia, the Phinma Group of Companies, Shindengen Philippines Corp., and General Milling Corp. gave donations in lieu of giving corporate gifts to clients last Christmas. Meanwhile, Globe Telecom Inc. turned over proceeds from its "Text 4D Children" promo, which will continue until April.

The banking industry, led by Union Bank, HSBC Corp. and Bank of the Philippine Islands, has likewise demonstrated support for the campaign.

One notable fun and creative fundraising initiative is that of HSBC president Warner Manning, who has encouraged his employees to help him lose 20 pounds by March 26 for the benefit of Children's Hour. In doing so, he has pledged to donate a certain amount for every pound he loses.

Other initiatives

Government, too, has shown its full support through the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The Philippine Army donated a substantial amount during the AFP's anniversary. The AFP, through its soldiers, is the biggest donor to date with more than P4.1 million raised for Children's Hour.

Other similar efforts are ongoing with the support of the Philippine National Police in the National Capital Region and cadets of the Philippine Military Academy, who have pledged a significant amount to be collected from their allowances for the period of November 2002 to February 2003.

In promoting the cause of the campaign, the academe has been extremely supportive.

Miriam College, being a member of the Consortium of Women's Colleges, spearheaded the launching of the campaign in all units of their school. Other schools, such as Assumption College, have also confirmed their participation by raising funds and increasing awareness among students of the plight of disadvantaged children in our country.

If this isn't enough, various restaurants have pledged to donate part of their proceeds to the campaign for the Valentine weekend. These include Cork, Magnum, Beluga and Pravda Bar, Kitchen, Ebun, Manga, Cibo, Burgoo and Figaro. On the hotel side, the rounding up of bills of the guests to the nearest hundreds will be implemented in Oakwood Premier Ayala Center this February until December this year.

P22M

With the support of hundreds of companies and organizations and over 130,600 employees nationwide, it is not surprising that the Children's Hour campaign has raised more than P22 million since August 2002.

With the support of provincial efforts that have raised more than 3 million in total, much can still be expected from the campaign in the months to come.

Meanwhile, more than 52 grant applications for beneficiaries nationwide are being screened. Announcement of approved beneficiaries of this year's campaign will be on May 15. More information on the Children's Hour can be found on its website: www.childrenshour.tk. Inquiries can be made at Tel. No. 894-5620/1663.

GIVE ONE HOUR
TO THE FILIPINO CHILD.
Children's

MEMBERS of the steering committee of the Children's Hour campaign. From left: Ayala Corp. chief executive Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, Philippine Ambassador to Switzerland Ching Escaler, former Philippine Ambassador to the Vatican Bienvenido Tan, INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and Central Azucarera de Don Pedro's Pedro Roxas.

ROMY HOMILLADA

Lucio Tan again selling PAL stake

TAIPAN Lucio Tan has not given up on his plans to sell Philippine Airlines Inc. and has, in fact, been offering a 3-percent commission to anybody who can find him a buyer, according to persons familiar with the matter.

A PAL insider said yesterday Tan would sell the airline "at the right price."

In 2000, Tan was quoted to have said that he would sell PAL for $800 million.

"Mr. Tan is giving a 3-percent commission to someone who could find him a good buyer," the source said.

Tan's spokesperson, former Customs Commissioner Salvador Mison, said he was not aware of such plans.

"This is a complete surprise. I heard him talk about selling in the past but I have not heard him do so recently," Mison said.

Tan said in 2000 he was selling his stake in the flag carrier to German carrier Lufthansa AG for at least $800 million. *Clarissa S. Batino*

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First Pacific sees closing of deal with Ayala-Campos group soon

By Doris C. Dumlao

HONG Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. expects to hurdle five conditions to the closing of the $90-million deal that will relinquish its controlling stake in Bonifacio Land Co. to the Ayala-Campos venture not later than April 2 this year.

In a disclosure to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Tuesday, First Pacific, parent company of Fort Bonifacio consortium leader Metro Pacific Corp., said its subsidiary Larouge BV had approved the assignment of its rights to a $90-million debt owed by MPC on the following conditions:

- MPC's major creditor ING Bank will waive its rights as a secured lender and allow the $90-million loan takeout to proceed;
- First Pacific subsidiary Larouge must receive evidence that shareholders of First Pacific have approved the debt transaction;
- The parties must satisfy relevant conditions under the MPC agreement with Ayala Land Inc. and Evergreen Holdings (an assignee of the Campos group's Greenfield Development Corp.) which will result in the transfer of MPC's 50.4-percent stake in BLC that was, in turn, secured by the $90-million loan from Larouge.
- Neither Larouge, MPC, the other pledgors nor any other third party will take any action to challenge the transactions such as through the winding up, administration, reorganization, rehabilitation, suspension of payments or declaration of insolvency; and,
- There shall be no litigation or similar proceedings and all conditions in relation to matters such as delivery of opinions, securing of authorizations, approvals and consents shall be taken in respect of Larouge, MPC or the other pledgors.

"This means that this is a done-deal although there is still a little bit of the road to go to close the transaction," MPC vice president David Nugent explained in an interview yesterday.

The First Pacific disclosure said that in the case of the first condition, ING Bank had already consented to release its security assignment upon closing of the loan takeout scheme.

Aside from the transfer by MPC of the 50.4-percent stake in BLC to the Ayala and Campos groups, the parties agreed last year to the sale and the assignment of P66 million in remaining BLC receivables to the joint venture.

Upon the closing of the transaction, MPC will continue to owe Larouge some P700 million representing the latter's cost of funds in respect of the $90-million loan, but about $20 million balance from the principal payable will be waived, the First Pacific disclosure said.

Gov't urged to put oil, gas reserves under its control

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PARTY-LIST Bayan Muna yesterday called on the government to put under its control the country's petroleum reserves and the oil and gas exploration operations here in view of a possible fuel supply crisis if war broke out in the Middle East.

Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran said in a statement putting local petroleum reserves under direct government control would help solve the country's energy problems.

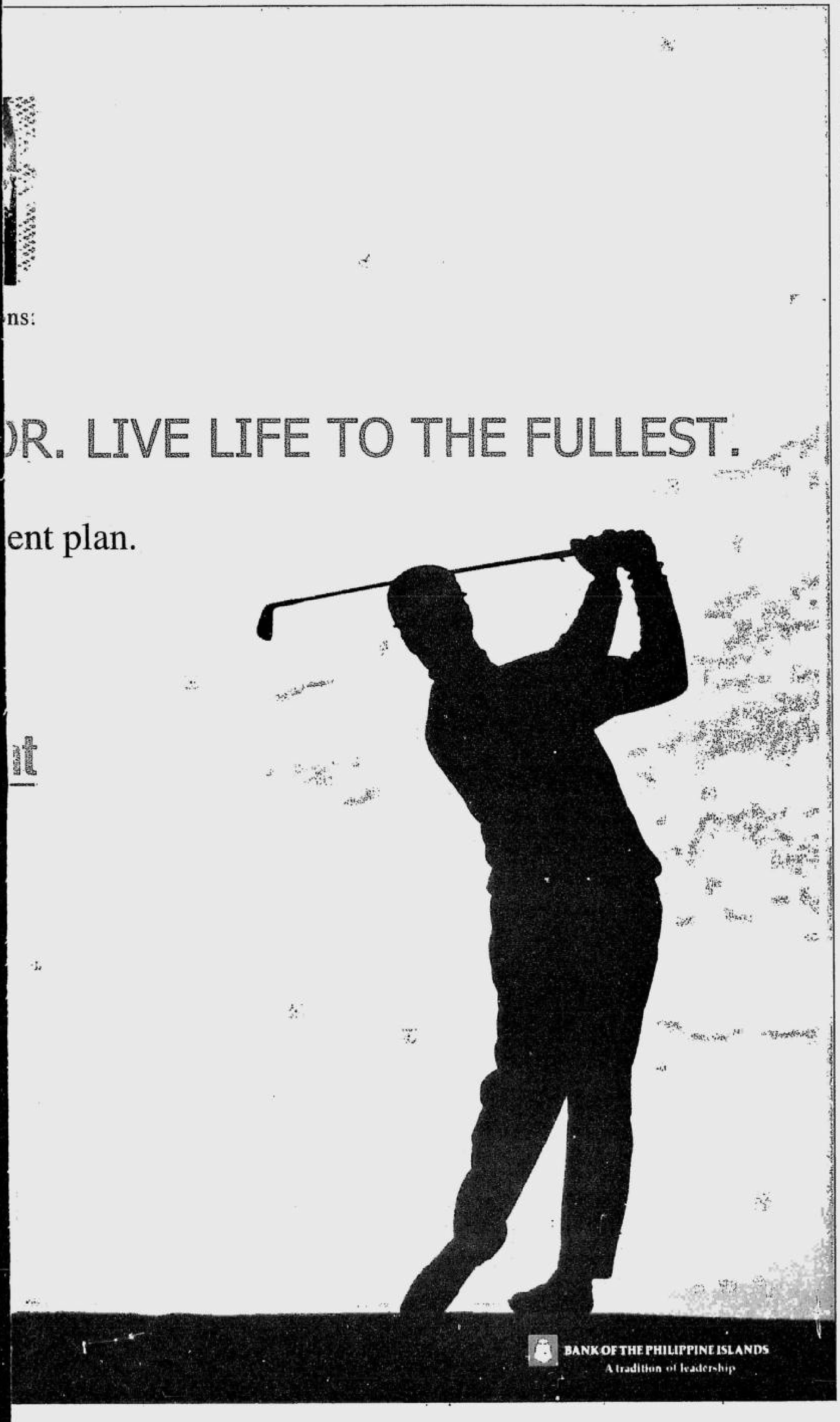
Beltran also called on Congress to investigate the energy department's entering into geophysical survey agreements with multinational firms.

The lawmaker noted that the surveys covered the petroleum basins of Southern Sulu Sea, East Palawan and Northwest Palawan.

"This move to allow foreign investors to gain greater control of the country's oil and gas reserves is a serious attack on laws protecting natural resources and preserving them for future generations," Beltran said.

He said the Department of Energy was "most likely shelling out millions of pesos in taxpayers' money" in engaging the foreign exploration firms.

In a related development, the DoE-led Energy Contingency Task Force said it was considering implementing a possible purchase limit for motorists in case of a war in Iraq.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Korea to fund P160-M project of Napocor

LEGAZPI CITY—The National Power Corp. (Napocor) is expanding its 100-megawatt substation in Daraga, Albay, to meet the increasing demand for power supply in Albay and Sorsogon provinces.

The project, costing P160.3 million, will be financed by the Economic Development Cooperation Fund of Korea at an interest rate of 4 percent, according to engineer Antonio Licup, area manager of Napocor in Daraga, Albay.

Licup said the current demand for electricity in the two provinces had already reached 75MW and was growing at an annual rate of almost 8 percent.

"Hence, there is a need to install a 50-MW transformer before the year 2005 to avoid problems such as overloading," he said.

Licup explained that the 8-percent increase in electric demand in the two provinces might vary, depending on the investments coming in the area.

"It may even reach 10-percent growth annually if there are big businesses that will come in Albay and Sorsogon that will hasten the consumption of the remaining available 25 megawatts," Licup added, saying that they need to anticipate such changes the soonest time possible.

Earlier, in the meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC) held in Albay in December last year, Vicente Loria of the project management group of Napocor said the project would not warrant any increase in the electricity rate within the service areas.

Licup said the endorsements of the provincial governments of Albay and Sorsogon had been secured and Napocor had already submitted the feasibility study to the National Economic Development Authority.

The Neda found the project to be economically and financially viable, he said.

As of now, Napocor is preparing for the bidding of the project. *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GOINGS-ON

P&A gets SEC seal

ACCOUNTING firm Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A) was recently given accreditation by the Securities and Exchange Commission as an external auditor of public companies after having complied with all the requirements provided under SEC Memorandum Circular No. 5, the Accreditation and Reportorial Requirements of External Auditors of Public Companies. SEC Circular No. 5 took effect on Jan. 1, 2003. All P&A's audit partners also received their respective SEC certificate of accreditation.

Accredited external auditors are required to maintain independence as defined under the Code of Professional Ethics for CPAs and be committed to adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct, including integrity and objectivity.

P&A is the country's third largest accounting firm with 15 partners and a total personnel complement of 420. It is a member of Grant Thornton International, one of the world's leading organizations of accounting and consulting firms.

Vazbuilt taps e-procurement

VAZQUEZ Building Systems Corp. shifted from traditional purchasing processes to online procurement by tapping BayanTrade's infrastructure and e-commerce services.

Vazbuilt offers housing consulting and building systems for residential and commercial customers.

Elizabeth Legasto, a member of the firm's board of directors and Vazbuilt's purchasing manager, said the company recently used BayanTrade's e-Bidding services in bidding out P4 million worth of construction materials. "We achieved a dramatic 23-percent cost reduction in estimated acquisition cost. That's equivalent to about P900,000 in savings."

Incorporated in 1991 by the Vazquez Group of Companies, Vazbuilt introduced what the company refers to as "prefabricated building technology" to the Philippines.

Online bidding is just one way the company intends to enhance efficiency and boost the bottom line by leveraging IT, Legasto said. "We are presently developing an interactive online database for the local construction industry that will be launched in March this year with BayanTrade's support. "This will be used by over 10,000 construction professionals to network and enhance business collaboration."

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Imported vehicle owners get reprieve from more taxes

By Charles E. Buban

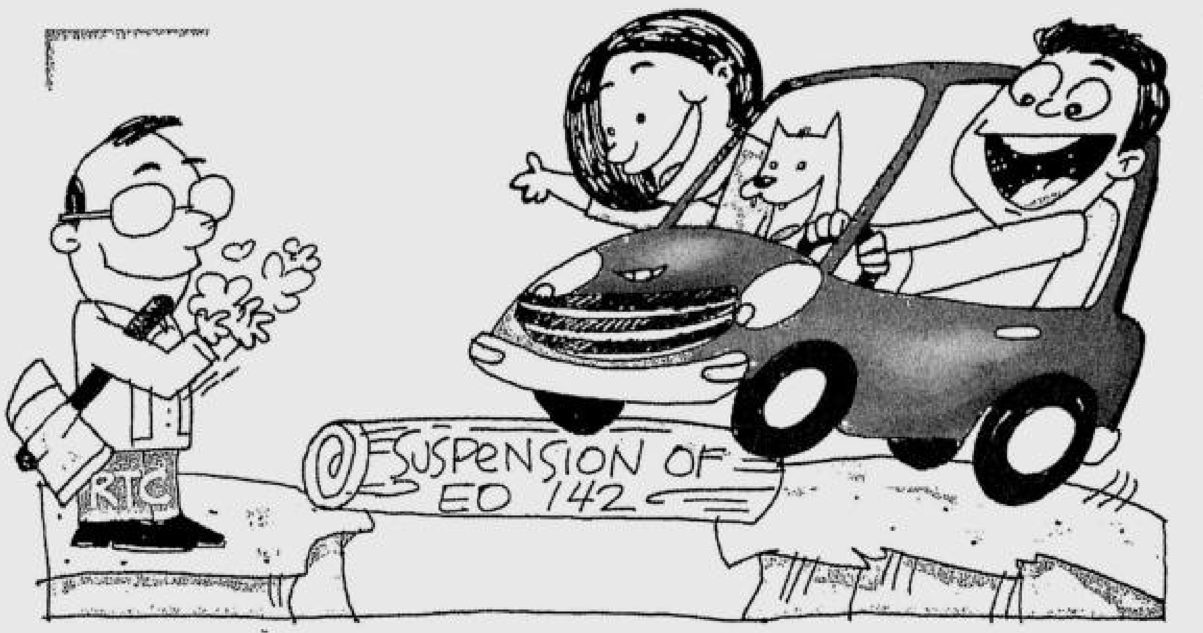


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

OWNERS of imported second-hand vehicles gained considerable legal ground after a lower court on Friday issued a preliminary injunction stopping the finance and transportation departments from implementing Executive Order 142.

In a five-page order issued by the Olongapo City Regional Trial Court, Judge Eliodoro Ubiadas of Branch 72 issued a writ of preliminary injunction stopping the two departments from implementing clearance requirements to owners of imported motor vehicles renewing their registration with the Land Transportation Office.

The court order also put on hold both joint department orders 2002-82 and 79-2002, which set guidelines for implementing EO 142.

Court 'concerned'

The court, however, stopped short of involving itself in a discussion on the constitutionality of the executive order and did not pass any judgment on the issues brought up by the petitioners.

The court instead expressed its concern" on the executive order's requirement of payment of additional duties and taxes after one year from the final settlement and payment of such duties and taxes when Section 1603 of the Tariff and Customs Code provides that such final settlement is final and conclusive upon all parties in the absence of fraud or protest.

EO 142 was signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Nov. 2, 2002 after reports reached Malacañang that an undetermined number of taxable imported motor vehicles have not been registered with the LTO, or have been registered without the correct taxes, duties and fees.

The court said fraud cannot be presumed by the issuance of EO 142 and its implementing rules and regulations and that the presumption in law is that official duties were regularly performed by concerned government officials.

Securing clearance

EO 142 empowers the department of transportation and communications as well as finance from requiring owners of imported secondhand vehicles to secure clearance from the Bureaus of Customs and Internal Revenue as a precondition for their initial registration or renewal of registration with the LTO.

Failure to obtain the required clearances will be the basis on which the BOC and the BIR can seize the vehicles wherever they may be found.

The twin department orders was also issued to empower the BIR and the BOC to fix the compromise amount to be paid by the registered owner for the vehicle's registration.

Section 3 of the DO 2002-82 signed by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho calls for the payment of a uniform compromise payment schedule fixed by the BOC and the BIR to secure the required clearance.

Unconstitutional

The court injunction was issued following a petition by a group of auctioneers and owners of imported secondhand vehicles who want to declare EO 142 and its two department orders as unconstitutional.

In one of their contentions, they argued that the guidelines in the orders violated the Equal Protection Clause under the Bill of Rights of the Constitution when Malacañang exempted motor vehicles imported by manufacturers and assemblers under the Motor Vehicle Development Program.

"Our group has been singled out by the orders when we are of the same class as those under the MVDP having both classified as importers of completely built-up vehicles," according to Romy Armamento, president of the Association of Philippine Auctioneers, one of the petitioners.

'The law denied us'

"We believe the law denied us and our buyers equal protection when it exempted the other group from this additional pre-condition for registration and renewal," he added.

The group of auctioneers also contended that all their imported units sold through auctions have gone through all the requirements of the different government agencies concerned.

The auctioneers believe that if there was anything amiss in any of the processes they underwent, these government agencies should not have allowed registration of their units in the first place.

Romeos romancing RP roads

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE FEEL of an Italian marque is elegant but expensive, especially for motorists in a country like the Philippines. For motoring enthusiasts the cheapest and most practical way to own an Italian motor masterpiece is through an Alfa Romeo.

Members of the Alfa Romeo Club of the Philippines recently professed their undying affection to their favorite sports car at the Wasabi restaurant on Makati Avenue. That they had always been fascinated with Italian automobiles is nothing surprising. Why go for a pocket-busting Ferrari when you can get a passionate Italian driving experience with an Alfa Romeo?

Their passion is reflected in their dedication. The club meets every month to conduct technical clinics, or simply have fun sharing and showing off their Alfas. The club, said tour director Ding Halili, is for people who own Alfas and need networks to source parts and technical support, and information about their cars. It also conducts out-of-town trips for owner-members—using their Alfas, of course.

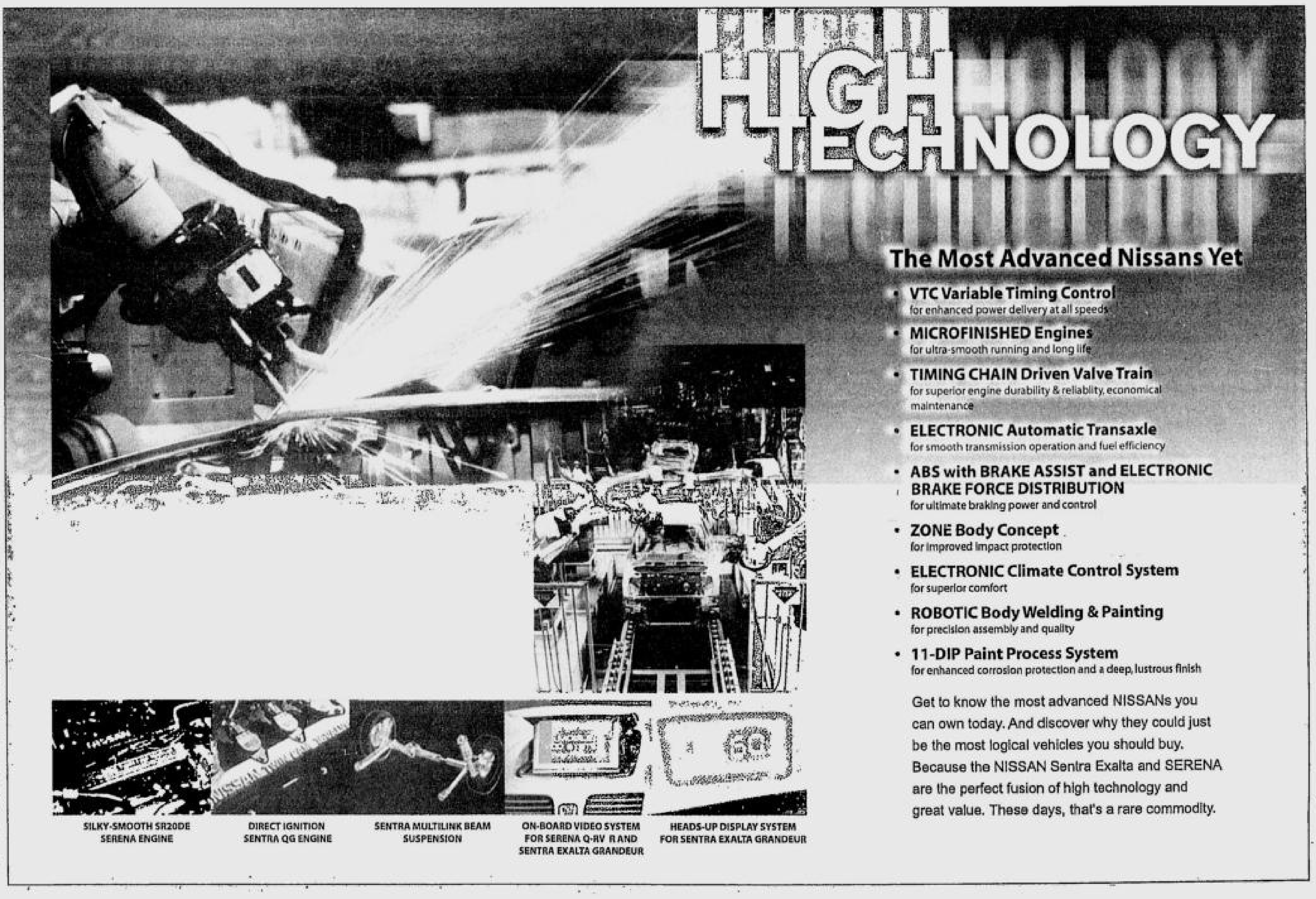
"Most of our members own classic Alfa Romeos. Now it's growing because we also welcome guys owning 155s or 164s, the modern-day Alfa Romeos," said Danny Lizares, director for public relations.

Lizares, 39, owns a classic Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV 1968—the predecessor of the new GTV. He also has a relatively new 164 turbo sedan, with a two-liter V6 engine. With that, he said, he has a combination of the old and the new.

He added Ferrari and Alfa Romeo were actually affiliated companies.

"Not too many people know that Enzo Ferrari actually started his career at Alfa Romeo. Today, both Ital-

ROMEOS/ B13



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Make peace—not war—on the road

By Tessa R. Salazar

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

WHEN love turns to hate, and peace turns to rage, when the flames of passion are doused, human beings can vent their anger, pain and personal frustrations on the highway, and anything and anyone on it.

Drivers upset over increasing fuel prices brought about by an impending US-Iraq war, or over the traffic congestion created by the suspension of the odd-even scheme, can find it easy to blow their top on the road. It now seems easier to trigger traffic disputes.

Keep your cool

The Land Transportation Office traffic safety division asks motorists to keep their cool. Always bear in mind, the office says, the sake of their loved ones, and they would live to drive another day.

There have been plenty of on-the-road lessons—spot examples of what happens when motorists let madness take control of the wheels—that the public reads every day on the paper or watch on television.

If you encounter a hostile motorist trying to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. Engaging in a staring match can incite violent or aggressive behavior, advises LTO traffic safety chief Daisy Jacobo.

Jacobo advises motorists to "get out of the hostile motorist's way as fast as possible." "If he or she does not relent and follows you, do not go home, drive straight to a police station or other locations where there will be witnesses," she says.

Basic road courtesies

You cannot control the traffic, but you can control your reaction to it, she says. There are several basic road courtesies that would spare us from road violence.

- **Keep your headlights on low beam.** Dim your lights for oncoming traffic. If an oncoming vehicle is on high beam, do not switch to high beam as well just because you want to teach him or her a lesson.
- **Do not let cell phones distract you from driving.** Cell phones are great for security, but bad for safe driving. You become a traffic hazard when you talk on the phone while driving.
- **Be sure to know how to operate your anti-theft alarm,** especially how to turn it off.
- **Personal statements in the form of stickers, graffiti that you paint, are not a good idea.** Refrain from showing personal statements, which can be offensive such as "I am Satan's child," or "Eat my dust." One should not exhibit provocative behavior. There are many mentally and emotionally disturbed people who know how to drive, and actually have a license to drive. When they read your "buzz off, man" sticker, they might not leave you alone.
- **Anger is hazardous,** as well. As much as possible, do not drive when you are angry.
- **Plan your trip ahead.** It can include altering your schedule so you can avoid heavy traffic. That means you allow plenty of time to reach the place so you don't have to hurry and beat traffic lights or drive through stop signs. Leave early, and live more.

Jacobo advises motorists to improve the ambiance of their vehicles to make driving comfortable. This includes maintaining the air con, bringing a spare fan belt, installing CD or stereo players to play preferably soothing music.

"Music is said to tame a beast. Your choice of music can also influence your behavior: choose a Bach or a Rachmaninoff instead of Wagner, whose works incite warlike feelings," she says.

She is also quick to add that drivers listening on the radio should avoid anger-inducing talk shows with topics on politics and corruption. "Concentrate on being relaxed."

Other reminders

- **Do not block passing lanes.** Stay out of the left lane, especially if you're a slow driver.
- **Yield to the vehicle that wants to pass or overtake you.**
- **Do not tailgate.** Maintain safe braking distances.
- **Before changing lanes, you have to communicate your intention.** Make the necessary signals and allowances.
- **Do not extend your hand and raise the "dirty" finger under any circumstances.**
- **It is impolite to blow your horn unnecessarily.** Avoid incessant blowing of horns. If you want to call the attention of the other drivers in an emergency situation, blowing the horn lightly is sufficient.
- **Courtesy demands that you do not take more than one parking space for your own car.** Park your car within the allotted space.
- **If you are not handicapped, do not park in the space allotted for them.**
- **Look before backing up.** Use a reliable guide, if possible.
- **In parallel parking, don't let your door strike the vehicle beside it.**

As William Shakespeare wrote in "Romeo and Juliet" as said by Friar Lawrence, "This violent beginnings have violent endings." You entered your car in peace, you should also leave it in the same manner.

Intensified driving experience from new Shell Velocity

SHELL raises anew the performance bar of premium gasoline with the completely new Shell Velocity gasoline using the same fuel formulation technology that powered the Shell-Ferrari F1 team through a victorious, record-breaking 2002 season.

With the new Velocity, you actually experience fuel performance at its peak. This means immediate responsiveness when you step on the accelerator; sustained power when going uphill or carrying a heavy load; and instant acceleration when overtaking or crossing the lights.

Unique formulation

"We are confident that the new intensified Shell Velocity will deliver all these promises because it has that unique formulation developed with Ferrari F1 at our prestigious Thornton Research Laboratory in the UK," says Eliseo B. Santiago, country chair of Shell companies in the Philippines.

"You will definitely enjoy using the new Shell Velocity because it is the best gasoline that you could possibly ask for. Whether you're overtaking, going uphill, accelerating, or taking that curve, you'll experience that peak performance," Santiago continues.

Better, more potent

Dr. Nick Davenport of Shell Global Solutions UK attests to the fact that the new Shell Velocity is a better and more potent blend of high-energy components that allow fuel to vaporize and burn more efficiently, resulting in more energy produced and released even more quickly. "Definitely, the new Shell Velocity easily outperforms higher octane gasoline brands available in the Philippines," he adds.

Shell Global Solutions UK oversees the Thornton Research Laboratory where research on Shell fuels and lubricants are conducted. It also is responsible for the fuel products used by Ferrari in the Formula 1 races.

Value for money

The new Shell Velocity is now available at selected Shell service stations in Metro Manila, still at the same price that our customers value. According to Cesar Romero, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. vice president for the retail business, a full tank of the new Shell Velocity costs only P20 higher than regular unleaded gasoline. "Definitely worth the additional values of responsiveness, power and acceleration that you will be getting when you get that full tank," he enjoins.

The new Velocity promises the same cleaning performance that the first Velocity introduced in 1999 is known for. It also fully complies with the latest specifications dictated by the Philippine Clean Air Act.

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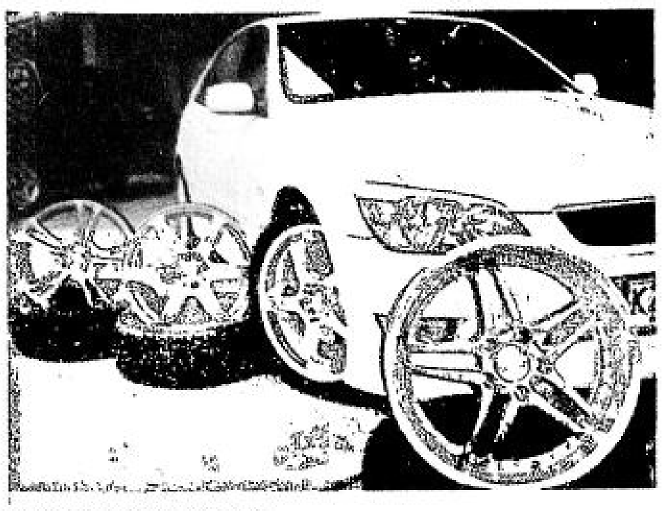

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Toyota's night to remember

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

WHAT kind of a government is this?

Bayani Fernando orders the cancellation of the color-coding but then, Mayor Binay of Makati ignores it.

Isn't Fernando supposed to be the MMDA boss? Is Makati not under the MMDA?

* * *

The color-coding system calls for vehicles whose plate numbers end with even numbers as not allowed for travel in Metro Manila on certain days of the week.

As MMDA chief, Fernando has the power to cancel the color-coding system. Trouble is, his decision can be disobeyed by mayors—as evidenced by Binay's refusal to heed Fernando's order.

What's this, a government peopled by comedians?

* * *

As if that was not enough, Mandaluyong Mayor Ben Hur Abalos followed suit when he also ordered the restoration of the color-coding scheme in his turf.

Why did Fernando cancel the enforcement of the color-coding when he could not truly enforce the ruling makes for a travesty of the law.

Seemingly, Fernando has no legal authority to whip our Metro Manila mayors in line. Why the MMDA continues to exist is this country's biggest joke.

* * *

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. celebrated its Triple Crown triumph in 2002 with a party at Dish, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati, on Monday.

It was a night to remember, not only because Vernon Sarne did a splendid crooning of "Because" by the Dave Clark Five but also because Ray Butch Gamboa re-enacted the Elvis D Pelvis act with his "Jailhouse Rock" and Popong Andolong sang "The Girl from Ipanema" in Portuguese!

Rockin' Revival, the band for the night, was kind enough to allow some of the media persons to temporarily take over the singing chores in the company of Toyota's VP for marketing Danny Isla, who was a revelation when he did a trio with Vernon and yours truly for some Beatles songs like "Honey Don't," "I Saw Her Standing There," "This Boy" and "If I Fell." After the "concert," Danny I promised to hold another one within the year.

* * *

In his speech, Nobuharu Tabata, president of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., said: "We have very special reasons to celebrate tonight. TMP came out in 2002 as the No. 1 passenger car brand, the No. 1 commercial vehicle, the Altis as the best-selling passenger car, the Revo as the best-selling vehicle and Toyota as the No. 1 automotive company in the Philippines. We truly have a lot to celebrate!"

It's been quite a while since Toyota last achieved the feat—in 1994 and 1995. Tabata called it "Our Triple Crown."

Tabata bared that Toyota has shown early dominance once more as Toyota, citing Campi sales figures, emerged the Triple Crown leader with a 29 percent market share in January.

* * *

I saw some familiar faces in the crowd, like Makoto Ono, Joe Javier, Ira Panganiban and Erle Sebastian, but one guy stood out though: Alfred Ty.

Alfred, the young pillar in the Toyota hierarchy, has matured both in looks and in his movements.

"Hi, I just know it's you," he said, sneaking from behind. "That long hair of yours will always give you away, Al."

Nice to see you again, Alfred. And when are we going to play golf? Just give me a ring and I'll come running.

* * *

But of course, Danny Isla was the undisputed star of the evening.

Danny I, easily the fastest-rising executive in the automotive industry today, brought the crowd to a hush when he read his speech composed of the titles of Beatles songs plus some chosen lines of the Fab Four's hits. Savor his piece, the product of a certified Beatlemaniac like me:

"It's been a long time...it's been a hard day's night and we all worked like a dog eight days a week. But Hey Jude...don't make it bad...we've taken a song to make it better. It's been a long, cold lonely winter but here comes the sun! With a little help from my friends, Toyota made it to the highest distinction with a Triple Crown—No. 1 in Passenger Cars, No. 1 in Commercial Vehicles and No. 1 in Overall Sales.

"You ask me why we're here? It's a ticket to ride a magical mystery tour—we're back to where we really belong. We will twist and shout to rock and roll music while we say, Roll Over Beethoven. We'll be happy just to dance with you—be happy and just act naturally.

"Thank you to all of you for your support. This night is for you. Let's forget the Taxman for now and just enjoy the rest of the evening.

"I don't want to spoil the party with a long speech so I'll go but before I do, lift up your glasses and let's come together in honoring Toyota, the Triple Crown holder. Cheers to Toyota and cheers to you!"

* * *

QUOTE ME. Parking properly is a good habit.

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AUTO BYTES

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Each week, a viewer's question related to cars and motoring gets answered on Auto Extreme. You can get a hard copy every Thursday in the Motoring section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

What is an oxygen sensor?
—*Dino Paulo Ramos of Dasmariñas, Cavite*

THE OXYGEN sensor is part of your car's emissions control system, which is a system that monitors how your engine is running by analyzing the exhaust. Several times a second, the oxygen sensor feeds information to your car's computer so it can determine if the right amount of air and fuel is going into the cylinders.

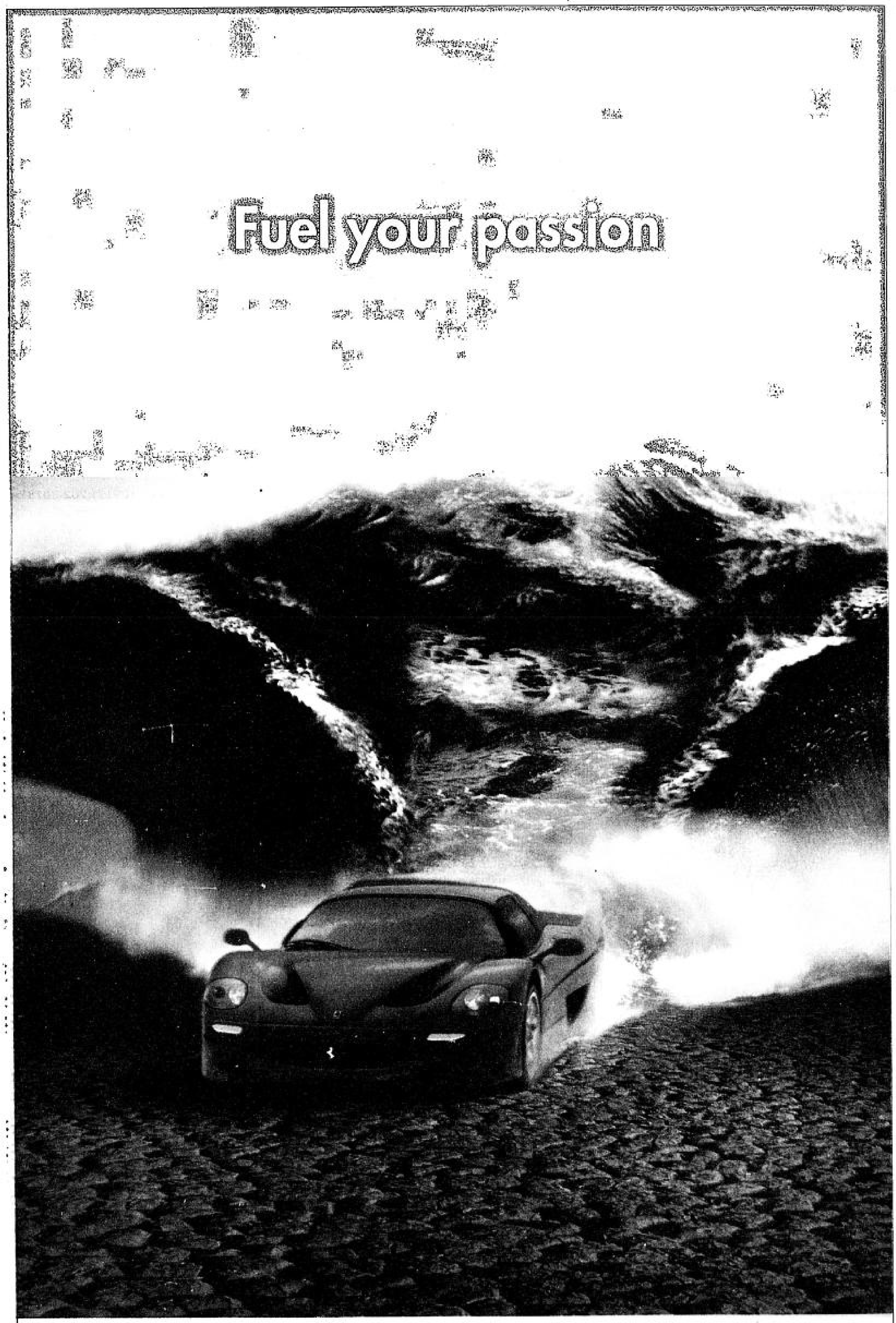
If the oxygen sensor detects too much oxygen in the exhaust, that indicates the mixture is running too lean—meaning there's too much air and not enough fuel. A lean-running engine can produce more nitrogen-oxide pollutants, and in some cases, can cause poor performance and even engine damage, so the computer adds more fuel to compensate.

If the sensor detects too little oxygen in the exhaust, that means the mixture is too rich—that means there's too much fuel and not enough air. Rich mixtures are also bad because the unburned fuel creates pollution with increased hydrocarbon emissions, so the computer makes the necessary adjustments.

These air/fuel mixture adjustments take place continuously—many times a minute to make sure the ratio is always perfect. This improves fuel economy, cuts down on pollution, and extends the life of the catalytic converter. If you have a failed oxygen sensor, you may be tipped off by the following symptoms:

- Surging and/or hesitation
- Decline in fuel economy
- Unacceptable exhaust emissions
- Premature failure of the catalytic converter.

Older cars with no computers simply have a warning light on the dashboard which the oxygen sensor switches on to tell you it's time to take your car to the mechanic for a checkup!



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Mercedes-Benz has high hopes this year

By Charles E. Buban

IN ITS latest sales report this month, Mercedes-Benz Cars Group of Stuttgart, Germany announced a new sales record for its passenger cars—a total of 81,100 in January 2003 as compared to 80,300 last year.

"This makes Mercedes-Benz the world's leading luxury brand with a total sales last month reaching 87,100 premium vehicles," reported Rodolfo Estrera, VP for Marketing and Communications of CATS Motors Inc., the leading dealer of the brand's passenger cars in the Philippines.

Estrera said that in Asia, Mercedes-Benz posted the best January sales figures in history with 8,400 units, or an increase of 33 percent from the same period last year.

Largest Asian market

Japan remains as Mercedes-Benz's largest national market in Asia, where sales increased by 15 percent to 3,200 vehicles (compared to 4 percent in the United States).

In the Philippines, favorable interest in the brand, particularly the C-Class and the E-Class, has increased.

"Thanks in part to efforts at bringing Mercedes-Benz closer to the public through mall tours and roadshows," said Estrera.

He added that the existence of full-factory warranty and after-sales support also contributes to the interest in the brand's passenger cars in the country.

Segment leader

The group considered its new E-Class its most successful variant, leading its segment last year.

The E-Class Saloon is powered by a CDI diesel engine that delivers exceptional refinement, fuel-efficiency and torque levels.

In nearly six months since its launch worldwide, the E-Class sedan has continually improved its position in the upper-range segment, and today has a world market share of more than 30 percent (242,300 units in 2002), according to the group's sales report.

"In fact, the 100,000th E-Class sedan was delivered to its new owner just six months after production of the first unit, the most successful market launch in the history of Mercedes-Benz," said Estrera.

A second look at diesel

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IN THE RACE for fuel efficiency as the Middle East situation became increasingly explosive, some automakers such as Toyota, Honda and General Motors made big investments in the R&D of hybrid cars, which run on a flexible combination of gasoline engine and electric motor. Others, such as Volkswagen, Audi, DaimlerChrysler, BMW and Ford turned to clean-diesel technology for a short-term solution to the looming oil supply crisis.

Long before Sept. 11, 2001 changed the world forever and foreshadowed conflict in the oil-rich Islamic nations of the Persian Gulf, diesel-powered cars were selling well in Europe. In 1997, 21.7 percent of all new cars sold in Europe had diesel engines. That figure rose to 32.3 percent in 2000 and 40 percent in 2002. Ford projects that by 2006, 50 percent of the cars it sells in Europe will be diesels.

The increasing popularity of diesel cars in Europe is easily explained: diesel cars get 20 percent to 40 percent more mileage than gasoline-fed cars (the 1.9-liter, 4-cylinder diesel Volkswagen New Beetle, for example, averages 42 miles per gallon and 49 mpg in city and highway driving while the 1.8-liter, 4-cylinder gasoline equivalent gets 24 mpg and 31 mpg in city and highway driving) and emit fewer "greenhouse" gases such as carbon dioxide.

Major advances

More important, diesel technology has made major advances in the past decade. Gone are the days when diesel engines were sluggish, shaky, noisy with harsh metallic knocking sounds and belching smelly black smoke. Performance has greatly improved, with the new generation of turbo-charged and "common rail" diesels offering better acceleration and low-end torque than gasoline-powered cars of comparable size. In other words, the new clean-burning diesel cars are fast, agile, smooth; quiet and almost emission-free, nothing like the old diesel of the 1970s that Dad used to drive. The new-age diesels are fun to drive, as anyone who has driven a diesel BMW 3 Series sedan or a turbodiesel Volvo S70 will eagerly testify.

It stands to reason that since diesels offer more torque, more low-end power (to tow big boats, for instance) and start strong from the red light, they would sell well in the United States as they do in Europe. But as of last year, less than 2 percent of vehicles on US roads were diesel due to lingering negative notions of diesel engines, clean-air regulations, environmental concerns and the higher price of a diesel vehicle (from $1,000 to $4,000 more) compared to its gasoline version. Moreover, according to the environmental planning manager of DaimlerChrysler, the quality of diesel fuel in the United States except for the state of California is the worst in the world, worse than what is available in India or Africa (or the Philippines? one wonders). It is only in California that ultra-low-sulfur diesel is sold.

Environmental groups point out that while more diesel vehicles on the road would reduce global-warming pollution, they still pose a significant risk to air quality. The Union of Concerned Scientists said that diesels are still allowed to emit twice as much nitrogen oxide as gasoline vehicles and 10 to 100 times more particulates, although diesel engine pollution has been cut by 80 percent to 90 percent in the last 20 years. A Sierra Club director said, "Diesel is the quick and dirty way to increase fuel economy. As long as we have other technologies that are clean, I don't see the point in producing carcinogenic soot."

Clean-diesel technology

But with the expected arrival of low-sulfur diesel fuel in 2006 in North America and the continued strides of clean-diesel technology, more automakers are fielding diesel vehicles in the United States—especially after VW diesel sales grew 24 percent in 2002 while the company's overall sales fell 5 percent. This year, VW plans to begin selling diesel sedan and wagon variants of its Passat together with the diesel Golfs, Jettas and New Beetles already in the US market. DaimlerChrysler will offer two diesels, a Mercedes E320 sedan with a turbo-charged six-cylinder engine and a 2.8-liter turbodiesel Liberty SUV in 2004 while Ford may sell its diesel Focus compact in the next five years.

At present, about 10 percent of full-size Ford, GM and DaimlerChrysler pickups and SUVs are diesel, such as the Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD and 3500, Dodge Ram 2500 and 3500, Ford F-250 and F-360, Ford Excursion SUV and Hummer H1 SUV. The pro-diesel people hope that by 2010, diesel sales will grow to 16 percent of the US car-truck market, which translates into Americans buying two million diesel-fed trucks and SUVs and 400,000 diesel passenger cars.

(With reports from The New York Times Service and Mercury News)

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Love may be blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

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FEB. 21-22	Dagupan City / Calasiao, Pangasinan, Barinos Shell Station, National Road	Ford Pampanga, Phone# (045) 961-1277 / (045) 961-2888 / (0917) 510-3902
MAR. 21-22	Santiago City, Isabela, Santiago City Shell Station (w/Jollibee), along National Highway	
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	VISAYAS	
FEB. 20-21	Ormoc City, Leyte, Goodyear, Servitek, Lilia Avenue, Cogon	Ford Cebu Phone# (032) 231-9180 loc. 206 / (0917) 323-9404
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	MINDANAO	
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PARKED 'ROMEOS'
Lovers—and owners—of Italian car Alfa Romeo say their 'object of affection' is fun to drive, and a true masterpiece

Romeos romancing RP roads

From page B10

ian manufacturers are affiliates under Fiat, Spa," said Alfa Romeo club chair Dr. Amado Castro, 78.

Castro is one of the founders of the Manila Sports Car Club, the oldest car enthusiasts' club, which started in 1967 under the acacia trees of the University of the Philippines in Diliman when he was still dean of the school of economics.

Castro, a lover of classic and sports cars, has been an Alfa Romeo enthusiast for over 20 years. "It has a racing tradition, is very fun to drive, very sporty and they're just so beautiful!"

Castro's first car was a four-door, 2-liter Berlina. He also has a 2-liter V6 turbo 1750 GTV that he describes as still in "showroom condition." He also owns a Spyder 105 series (1971). He had a 4-door Julia but it burned down and was irreparable.

Castro is also the fourth owner of the Berlina, the first owner of which was the late Vice President of the Philippines Fernando Lopez who bought it for his grandson.

He recalled at one time he owned eight Alfa Romeo cars, and another one he was part owner of. These included the cars he restored.

Other members of the club have Guilia 1600 and 2000.

The club's favorite Alfa Romeo models are the AR Julia GTV and the Alfa Romeo Sagato EZ 1, the latter fetching over $1 million in car magazines.

Lizares is particular with the performance of his 164. He has changed its entire suspension, the cooling system and the detailing.

"I bought the car here but all the parts—practically 80 percent of them—were imported. I ordered them via the Internet," he said.

"It's now easy to order. With the advent of the Internet, I can canvass well and save more. There are now door-to-door services. It is very convenient. It's even cheaper," he added.

Meanwhile, the Manila Sports Car Club, in which the Alfa Romeo group is affiliated, meets every first Sunday of each month at Rockwell at 7 a.m. It's that golden morning hour when classic, collectible cars are flaunted.

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250cc - class rider: Taro Sekiguchi
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BUSINESS

Planned tax perks for auto makers junked

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has thrown a monkey wrench at the Department of Trade and Industry's plan to grant tax credits to local assemblers exporting completely built up (CBU) units.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the DOF feared that the export subsidies would further sap the government's revenue collections and aggravate the budget deficit which hit a record P212.7 billion last year.

The DTI is proposing to give tax credits for every unit shipped out by local assemblers in the country with the tax credits to be used to offset excise taxes on their domestic sales. Without export subsidies, local assemblers were unlikely to tap other Asean markets from their factories in the Philippines which has the smallest domestic market among Asean's top 4 markets.

Roxas said the DOF preferred to give the export incentives in the form of tax- and duty-free importation of capital equipment rather than tax credits.

"The import perks are more palatable to the DOF because the country would not forego any revenues since these imports would have not come in without the tax and duty exemption. In contrast, a tax credit would have a direct impact on the revenue stream of the government because it would forego taxes that it has been collecting," Roxas said.

Despite the DOF's rebuff, Roxas stressed the DTI was not wavering in its bid to adopt an export incentive program for the local automotive industry and that it would continue to negotiate with the DOF to find a mutually acceptable process on goading assemblers to target the Asean market.

Roxas said the export subsidies were necessary to convince Japanese automotive giants Toyota, Mitsubishi, and Honda to make the Philippines one of their export production bases in the region and make the local industry relevant in a single market.

The export subsidy program is the main engine of the newly overhauled Motor Vehicle Development Program aimed at boosting the industry's annual output to at least 200,000 units by 2005.

The DTI wants at least a quarter of the domestic production to be exported under the Asean Free Trade Area program where duties on vehicles assembled in the region have been reduced to no more than 5 percent starting this year.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

That loving filling

Can food really arouse desire? Or is it all in the mind?

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

WOLFGANG Puck, the comical chef on Food Network, always ends his program with these three words: "Live, love, eat!"

Knowingly or otherwise, he is tossing to his viewers the essential ingredients of life and the importance of having just the right mix in each of us. They come to mind because living, loving and eating are especially hot topics once again this Valentines.

All in the mind

Many studies have explored the idea of food arousing and increasing sexual desire. But the relationship among food, sensuality and romance can be far more wide-ranging and subtle than merely consuming aphrodisiacs, which are meant to stimulate the libido in some hidden, physiological way.

"Despite long-standing literary and popular interest in aphrodisiacs, I think no scientific studies of them have been made and none of these foods, however, have any direct effect on one's sexual drive," says culinary expert Reggie Aspiras. "There may be some vitamins out there that can increase one's sexual interest, but not solely food."

Aspiras believes while food can basically alter the bodily state of human beings, "I am

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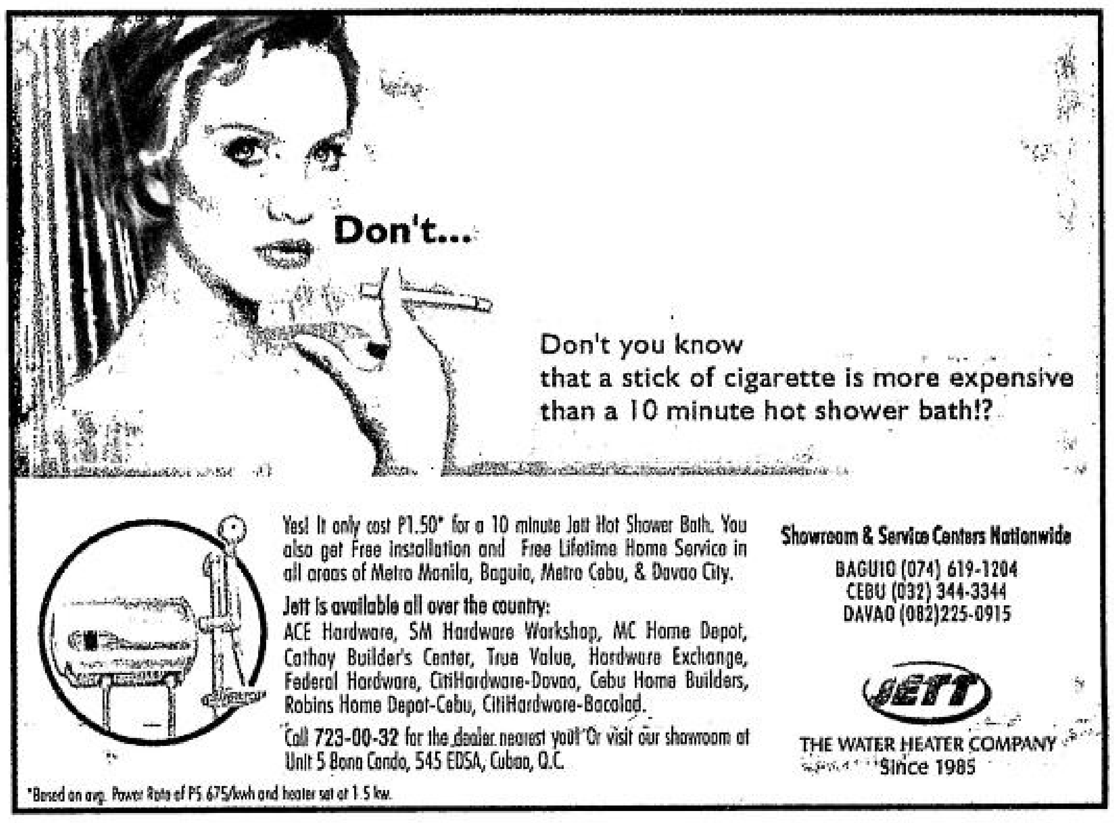
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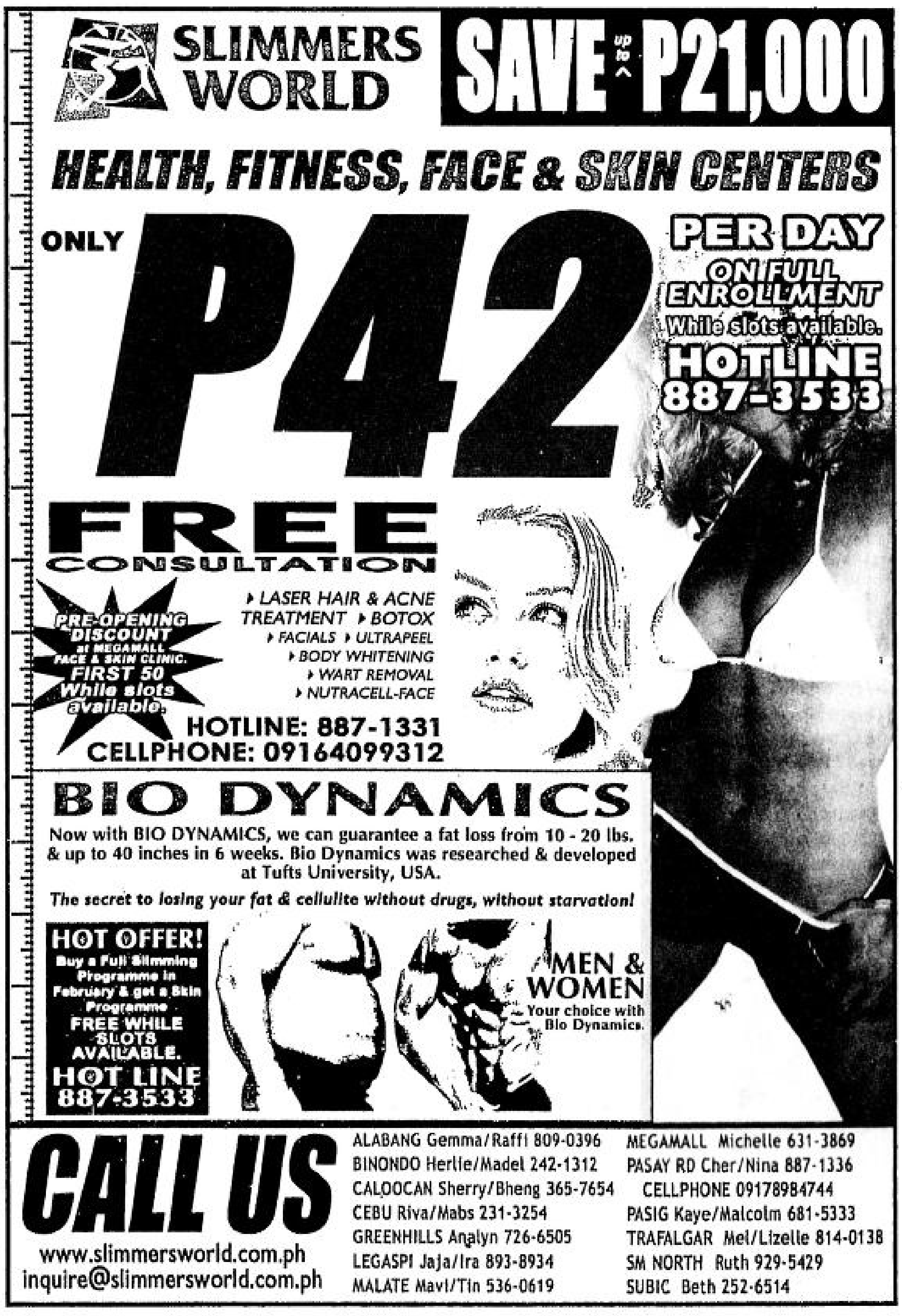
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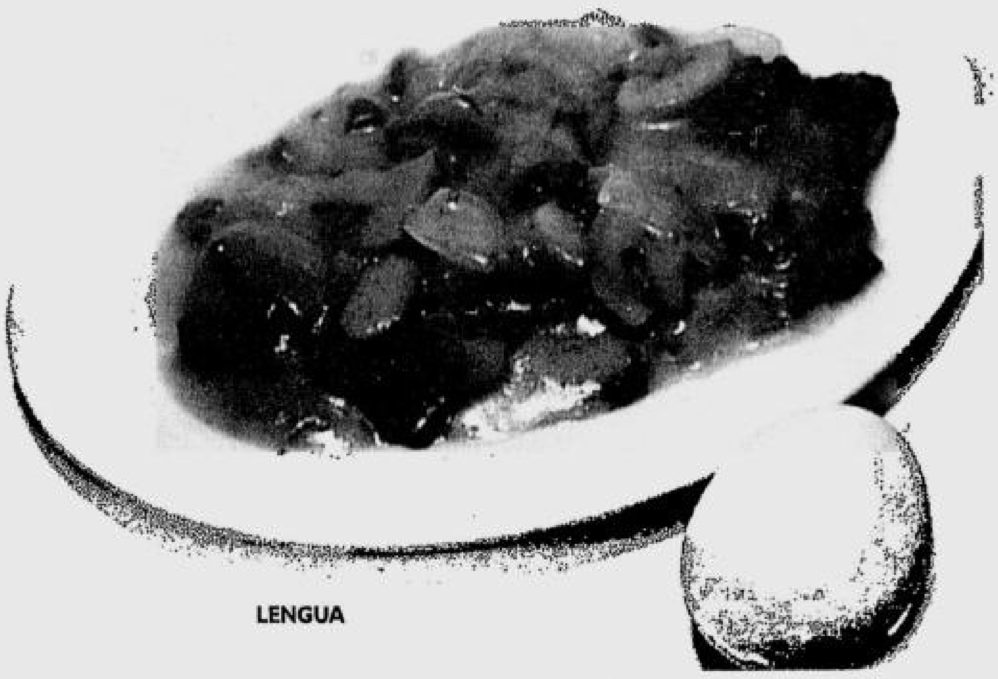

LENGUA

Eggs galore

By Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Roger Carpio

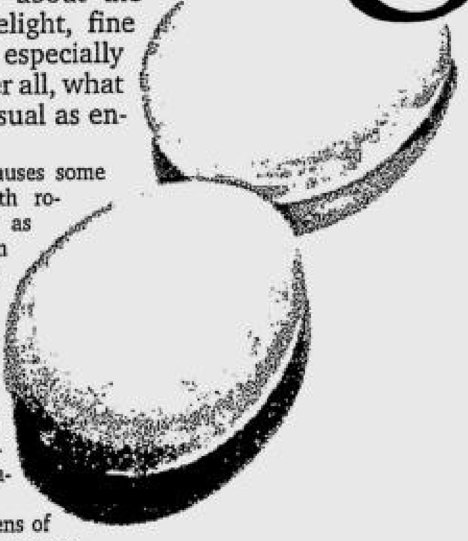
FROM as far back as ancient times, certain foods have been thought to have libido-enhancing effects. While there is a definite lack of scientific evidence behind many claims, there is still something to be said about the combination of candlelight, fine wine and good food, especially on Valentine's Day. After all, what other activity is as sensual as enjoying a good meal?

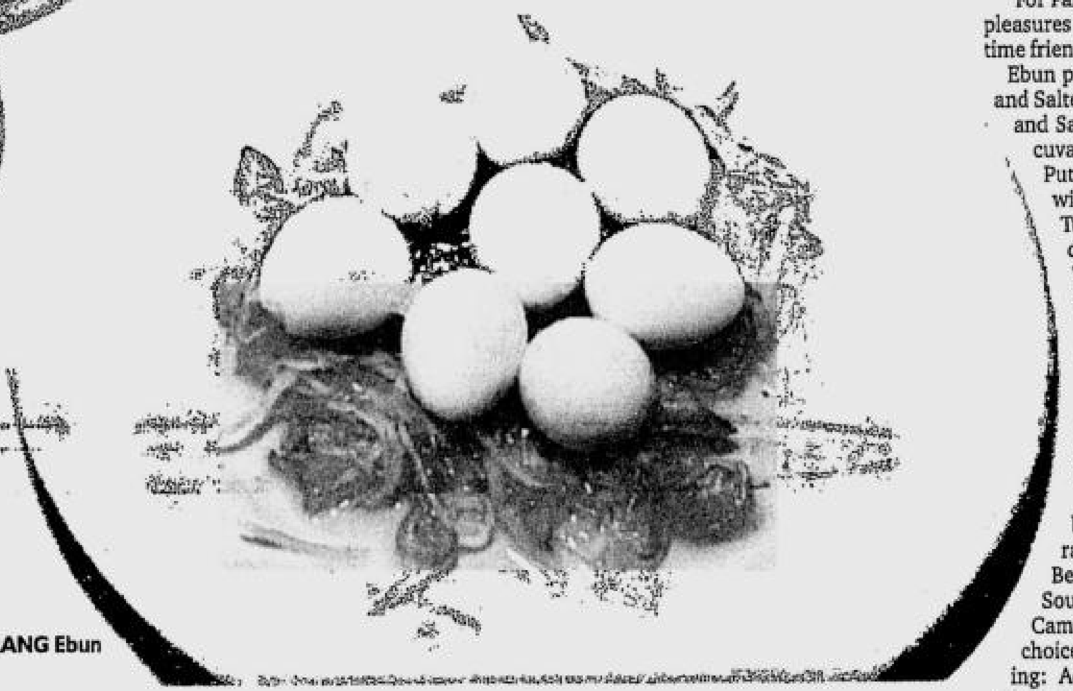
So just what is it that causes some foods to be associated with romance? Some foods, such as eggs, get their reputation from their close resemblance to certain body parts.

According to Grimod de la Reyniere, a French lawyer who established a reputation as a gourmet, the French know 685 different ways of dressing eggs, without counting those which culinary savants invent everyday.

Add to those 685 the dozens of ways other people know to prepare eggs. Eggs leaven angel food cakes and soufflés, color and thicken sauces, bind croquettes, emulsify mayonnaise, clarify aspics, give butter-fried food crisp fragile crusts, glaze baked goods, smooth ice creams and candies and enrich the flavor and food value of everything.

Eggs have been called nature's "nutritional bombshells" because of their near-perfect protein and high vitamin and mineral content. Yet they are low in calories. Indeed, no food is more versatile.




ATCHARANG Ebun

Simply or lavishly

At Ebun Kusinang Pinoy, eggs are cooked simply or lavishly, solo or with something sweet or savory. "Ebun" is Pampango for "egg."

The restaurant features Atcharang Ebun, Sarsiadong Ebun with Pandesal, Bola-bolang Ebun, Asadong Ebun, Balot ala Pobre, Tortang Talong, Morcon with Ebun ng Pato, Ginisang Itlog ng Tuna with Sotanghon, Sarsiadong Tilapia, Tortang Ebun with Rice and Saguin, and Umba with Ebun.

Owned and managed by Maritel Nievera, Rikki Dee and Ricco Ocampo, Ebun not only offers Pampango egg dishes but also other Pampango specialties that are regarded by some as too exotic for taste. Nievera and Ocampo both come from Pampanga—Nievera is from Angeles while Ocampo is from San Fernando. The restaurant's crew members are mostly from Pampanga. Dee, born and raised in Manila, is clearly outnumbered, but he obviously doesn't mind.

"Pampanga's culinary reputation is due not only to the myriad of dishes the province has been known for but also to the flavor Pampangos add to their cooking," Ocampo said.

Several dishes are accompanied by condiments like *buro*, vinaigrette or fish sauce.

Modern Pinoy

The 90-seater Ebun's interior decor is somewhat spare. One wall is embellished with photos of eggs by Jojo Guingona, paintings of eggs by Robbie Mananquil, ceramics shaped into eggs, old Coke bottles, glasses, bowls and jars. A sign that reads "Babala: Bawal magtsismisan, bawal mang-intriga, bawal manigarilyo at mangalumbaba" is printed on white paper placemats and menu cards on tables. Over the main and side entrances are glass cases filled with decorative eggs. Even the hanging lights look like eggs. "Ebun's design is modern Pinoy with the feel of an old cafeteria," Ocampo said.

Major pleasure

While the trend is to move toward nonfat, sugar-free alternatives, counting calories and minimizing cholesterol hardly figure in Pampango recipes and everyday cooking, which is evident in Ebun's offerings.

"For Pampangos, eating is one of the major pleasures in life," said Dee, Ocampo's longtime friend and business partner.

Ebun proffers Bibingka with Quesong Puti and Salted Egg, Bibingka with Queso de Bola and Salted Egg, Puto Bumbong with Mascuvado and Grated Coconut, Tidtad at Puto, Pandesal Panini with Camote with Giniling, Longganiza Chicken or Tuyo with Quesong Puti and native delicacies such as Lelut Balatung and Tibok-tibok. This is just the *merienda* fare, mind you.

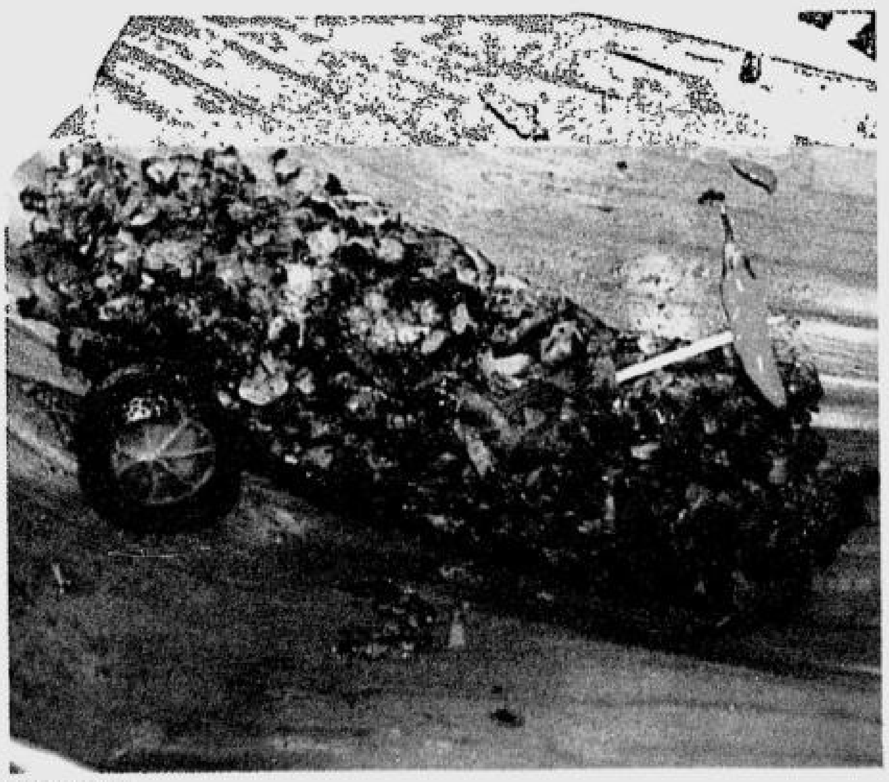
Also served are hearty portions of straightforward, soul-satisfying dishes such as Sisig ni Mely, Bangus Belly in Tausi Sauce, Lengua, Garlic Pugo Inadobo, Bulalong Baka with Mais, Inihaw na Utak ng Baboy and Kare-kare Buntot ng Baka.

There's also Imbento, which is a bestseller at the trio's other restaurant called Mangan. Inspired by the Bento Box, it includes Milagrosa Rice, Soup of the Day, Atchara, Burong Camias and Burong Mustasa with a choice of any two dishes from the following: Adobong Chicken, Gizzard, Atay at Ebun, Umba with Ebun, Binagoongan, Pulutok, Tidtad, Asadong Manok, Lechon Babi, Crispy Hito, Pusit Adobo, Lagat Hito with Alagao, Sugpo sa Aligue, Inihaw na Liempo, Inihaw na Ulo ng Salmon, Lagat Labanos, Lagat Ampalaya, Ginisang Burong Mustasa, Gatang Sigarillas with Bagoong, Gatang Sitaw at Kalabasa, and Grilled Eggplant with Burong Hipon. Kundimans soften the din of the lunch and dinner rush.

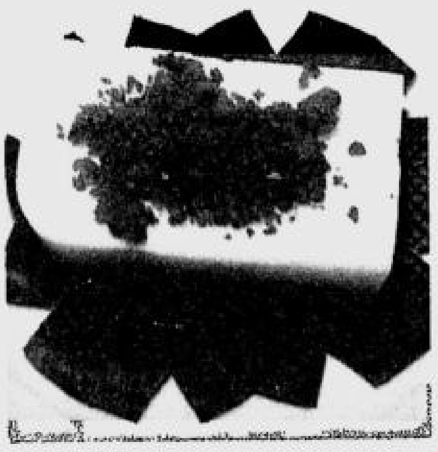
Ebun's menu truly sums up how Pampango cuisine is regarded—food that calls attention for its flavors and unlimited variety.

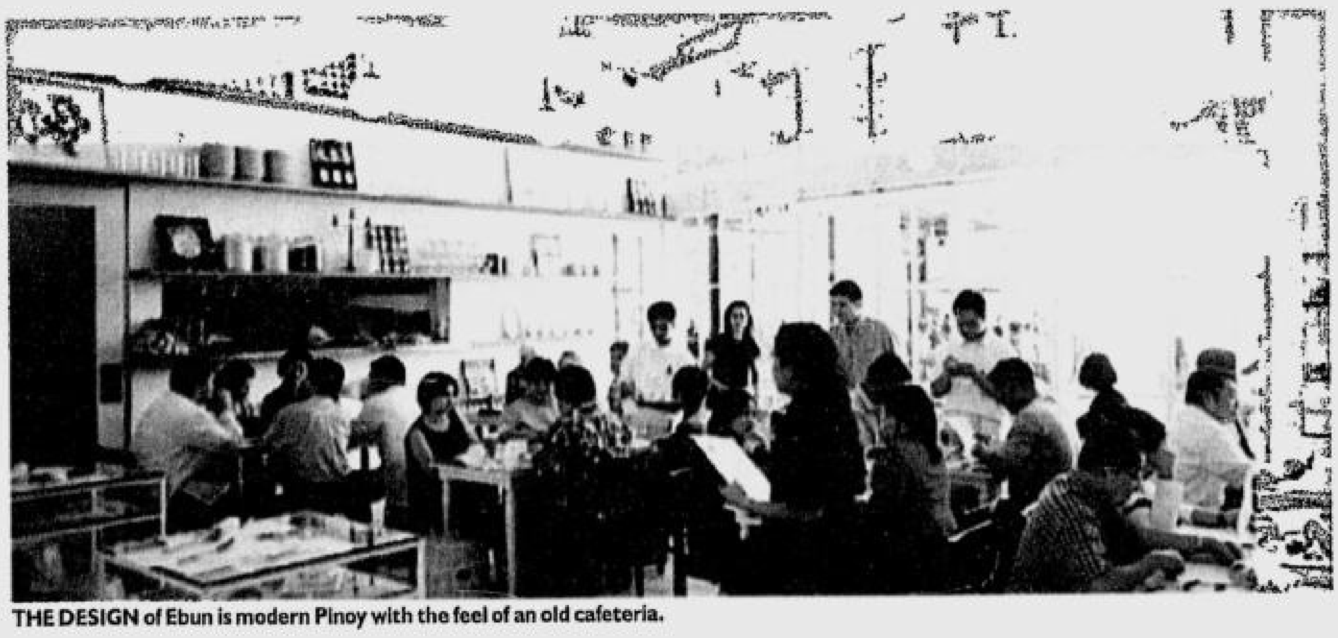
Ebun Kusinang Pinoy is located at Greenbelt 3, Makati. It's open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily and until 12 a.m. on weekends.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph


SISIG ni Mely

With its decor patterned after a London shop, Ebun is easily mistaken for anything other than a Pinoy restaurant but trust it to serve delicious and affordable Pampango cuisine


TIBOK-TIBOK


THE DESIGN of Ebun is modern Pinoy with the feel of an old cafeteria.

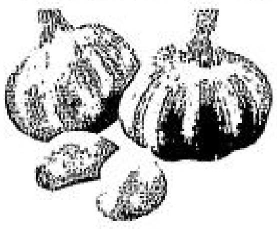
FRIENDS and business partners: Ricco Ocampo (left) and Rikki Dee

That loving filling

From page C1

sure there are certain types of food that can either increase or decrease libido. However, the quantity should be taken into consideration. I have yet to come across anything that will tell you how much of a certain type of food to eat to alter your sexual appetite."

For Aspiras, food to be aphrodisiac must be light and easy to digest. "It should keep the eater in feeling light in order for the body to function better for a purpose. That's why oysters are popular aphrodisiacs."


GARLIC

Another famous chef and food teacher Gene Gonzales explains that strength of aphrodisiacs. "In world context, aphrodisiacs have two purposes, pharmacological and anthropological. The former means whatever you eat creates effect in your body; the other is, if you eat a certain food, the traits of whatever you're eating will give you the aphrodisiac power. Meaning, if you eat deer's penis, you will become more prolific and you move fast; if you eat snake, you become very aggressive, you will perform better in terms of sex."

In essence, what makes for a sensual dish is a matter of very personal opinion. Working with and eating food is a continual process of seduction. Food stimulates all five senses and there are truly certain foods with certain textures that are more conducive to feeling romantic.

So calm down, and remember that it is the mind, the atmosphere, the people and the pleasure that do the job— not just the food.

For those who want to cook up a Valentine meal at home incorporating aphrodisiacs, you can try the recipes below provided by food expert Dorothy Ferreria.

Clam Chowder in Bread Soup Bowl

1 k clams
½ sliced onion
2 slices ginger
1 bay leaf (laurel)
200 grams bacon
1 c chopped onions
½ c sliced celery stalk
1 c chopped leeks
1/3 c all-purpose flour
3 c water
½ c clam broth
½ c white wine
2 c diced potatoes
1 c full cream milk
store-bought bread for soup
salt and pepper to taste

Soak the clams in a bowl with a generous amount of water and a spoonful of rock salt. Let stand for about half an hour. Drain.

In a stockpot or wok pour in the clams. Add onion, ginger, bay leaf and salt and pepper to taste. Add enough water to cover the clams. Boil and then simmer until the clams open. Remove from heat. Remove the clam meat from the shell and discard the shell. Set aside ½ cup clam broth for later use.

Chop the bacon and transfer to a stockpot or wok. Place over medium heat. Wait for the fat to come out and for the bacon to get light brown. Quickly add onions, celery and leeks. Sauté until the vegetables are done. Stir in the flour and wait for the flour to be absorbed by the mixture. Pour in the water, the clam broth and the white wine. Mix well and then pour in the potatoes. Cook over medium heat until the potatoes are done. Stir in the clams and the milk. Correct the seasonings as necessary. Transfer to bread soup bowls which have been previously reheated in the oven and garnish with parsley.

Baked Manila Clams with Cheesy Bacon Topping

1 k clams
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger
For white sauce:
2 tbsp butter
½ tsp finely chopped garlic
¼ c finely chopped spring onions or leeks
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 c full cream milk
For topping:
100 g bacon, finely chopped
mozzarella cheese, coarsely grated
fine salt and finely ground black pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wash the clams well. Transfer to a pot and add slices of ginger. Add about a cup of water and place over medium heat. Stir from time to time. As soon as the clams open up, turn off the heat. Drain and discard the liquid. Discard the upper half of the shell. Arrange the remaining clams in a jellyroll pan or cookie sheet.

To prepare the white sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the garlic and the spring onions and sauté briefly. Pour in the flour and mix until blended. Add the milk and continue to cook, stirring continuously, until the sauce thickens to the desired consistency.

Pour the sauce over the clams. Top with finely chopped bacon and mozzarella cheese. Bake for 15 minutes or until the surface begins to have brown spots. Serve immediately.

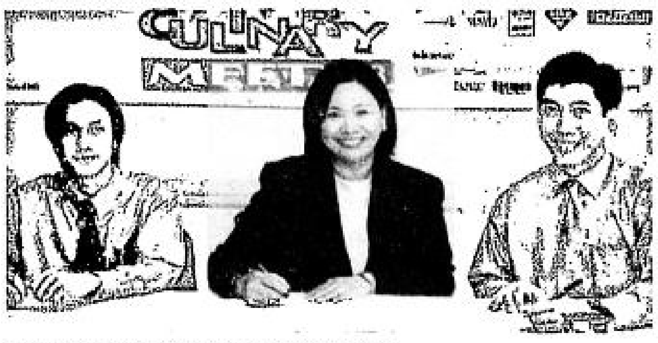
More jazzed up 'Javas'

SEATTLE'S Best Coffee unveils a whole new line of frothy concoctions.

Javanilla Shake—rich coffee ice cream topped with a generous dollop of thick whipped cream and ground espresso sprinkles gets a new name, Classic Javanilla shake, and three new flavors: Raspberry, Frosted Mint and Cookie.

The Raspberry Javanilla Shake tastes like a luscious chocolate truffle laced with fruity preserve, with candy-pink swirls on the whipped cream; Frosted Mint Javanilla Shake gives a burst of cooling flavor, the frosted mint syrup a perfect counterpoint to the sweetness of coffee ice cream; and the Cookie Javanilla Shake, perhaps the sweetest of the three, has chunks of Oreo cookies.

Seattle's Best Coffee has branches at the Village Square of Harrison Plaza Manila, Eastwood City Walk, E. Rodriguez, SM Manila, SM Megamall Mega Strip, Rockwell Power Plant, Greenbelt 1 and 3, Filinvest Festival Mall and Alabang Town Center .



CULINARY MEET AT MEGAMALL
Century Tuna launches the first-ever cooking challenge for students and food enthusiasts.
Dubbed the Century Tuna Culinary Meet 2003, it will be held on March 29-30 at Megatrade Hall 3, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Shown above during the contract signing are (from left) Sherwin Mendoza, marketing services assistant, Ariston-Italian designer kitchens; Gigi Angkaw group culinary manager, Century Canning Corp.; and Norman Reynoso, marketing services manager, Ariston-Italian designer kitchens.

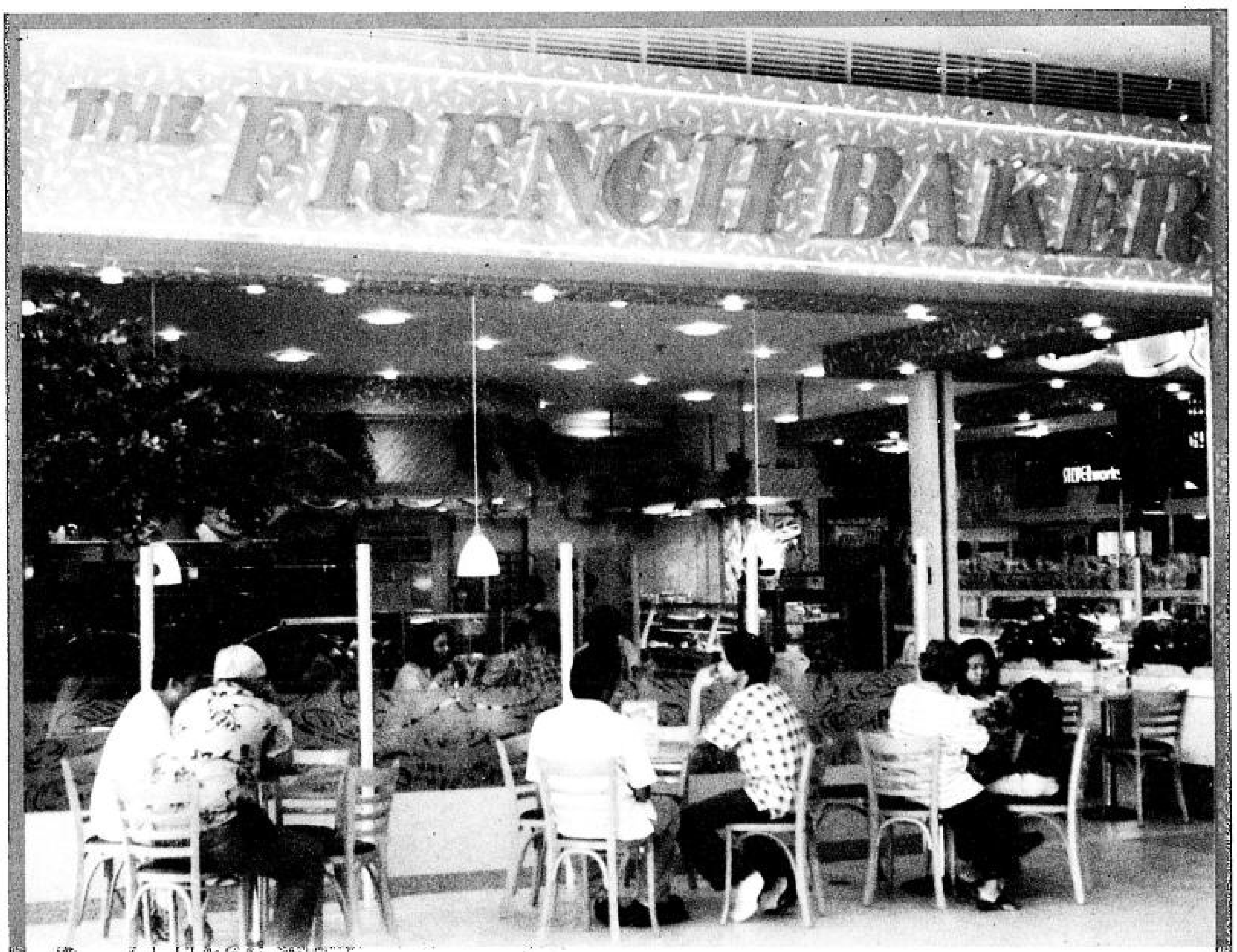
Be a good food server in five days

A BASIC Foodservers Training has been set by ProActive Center for Training (PACT) on Feb. 17-21, 2-6 p.m., at Bedas Restaurant, C-5, Libis, Quezon City.

Registration and inquiries are accepted on a first come-first served basis at 787-6370 or 0919-5500601, or e-mail pactserv@yahoo.com.

The training features hands-on workshops on table setting, service, napkin folding and table skirting.

Topics also include food service behavior, personality and grooming, menu familiarization and merchandising, customer relations and hygiene and sanitation. Trainers are food service consultants and professors of hotel and restaurant management who are award-winning coaches of the student division of Chefs on Parade.



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SM City BICUTAN

THE FRENCH BAKER

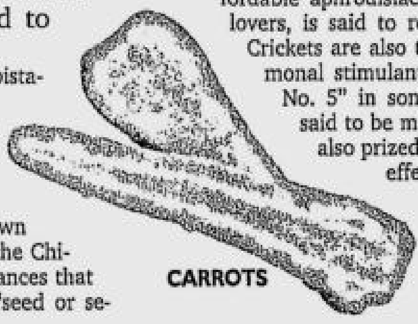
If you think it's sexy, just reach out and taste it

GINSENG

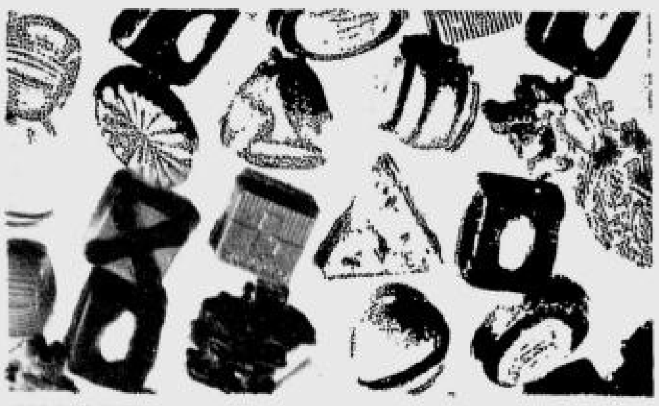
THE ULTIMATE purpose of aphrodisiacs is to incite the carnal instinct. Almost every culture has its own list of delicacies designed to induce passion.

In the Arab culture, pistachio nuts are said to kindle lust. In Europe and America, lovers are known to feed on oysters or figs drizzled with honey to get their own juices flowing. Among the Chinese folk healers, substances that "by nature" represent "seed or semen" such as bulbs, eggs, snails" were also considered to generate arousal.

In the Philippines, *balut* (hard-boiled duck egg with a developed embryo), the most affordable aphrodisiac for street-smart Pinoy lovers, is said to rejuvenate one's energy. Crickets are also touted as powerful hormonal stimulant. The notorious "Soup No. 5" in some Chinese restaurants, said to be made of cow's testicles, is also prized for its magically potent effects.



CARROTS

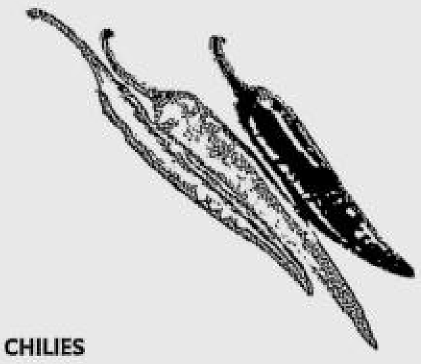


CHOCOLATES

It is said that if a food resembles the genitalia (banana, carrot and asparagus), it possesses sexual powers. Other claimed aphrodisiacs include animal parts.

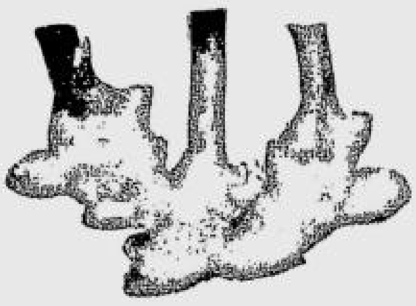
Many foods are considered sexy because of their aroma, juiciness or tang. Here's a list of popular aphrodisiacs:

- Asparagus. Given it's phallic shape, asparagus offers a different sensuous experience.
- Ginseng. A very powerful hormonal stimulant because the roots resemble the human body.
- Chili (or cayenne pepper). An exciting agent that stimulates the blood circulation.



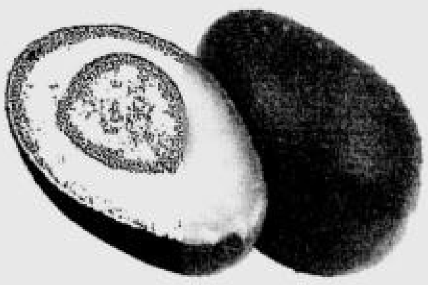
CHILIES

- Ginger. It excites the senses. Taken in reasonable doses, it causes healthy hot flushes. In excessive ones, it irritates the intestines.



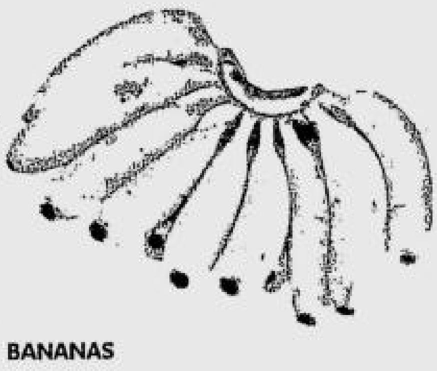
GINGER

- Oregano. A remarkable exciting agent.
- Almond. A symbol of fertility throughout the ages. The aroma induces passion among women.
- Avocado. The ancients thought the fruit hanging in pairs on the tree resembled the male's testicles. This is a delicious fruit with a sensuous texture.



AVOCADO

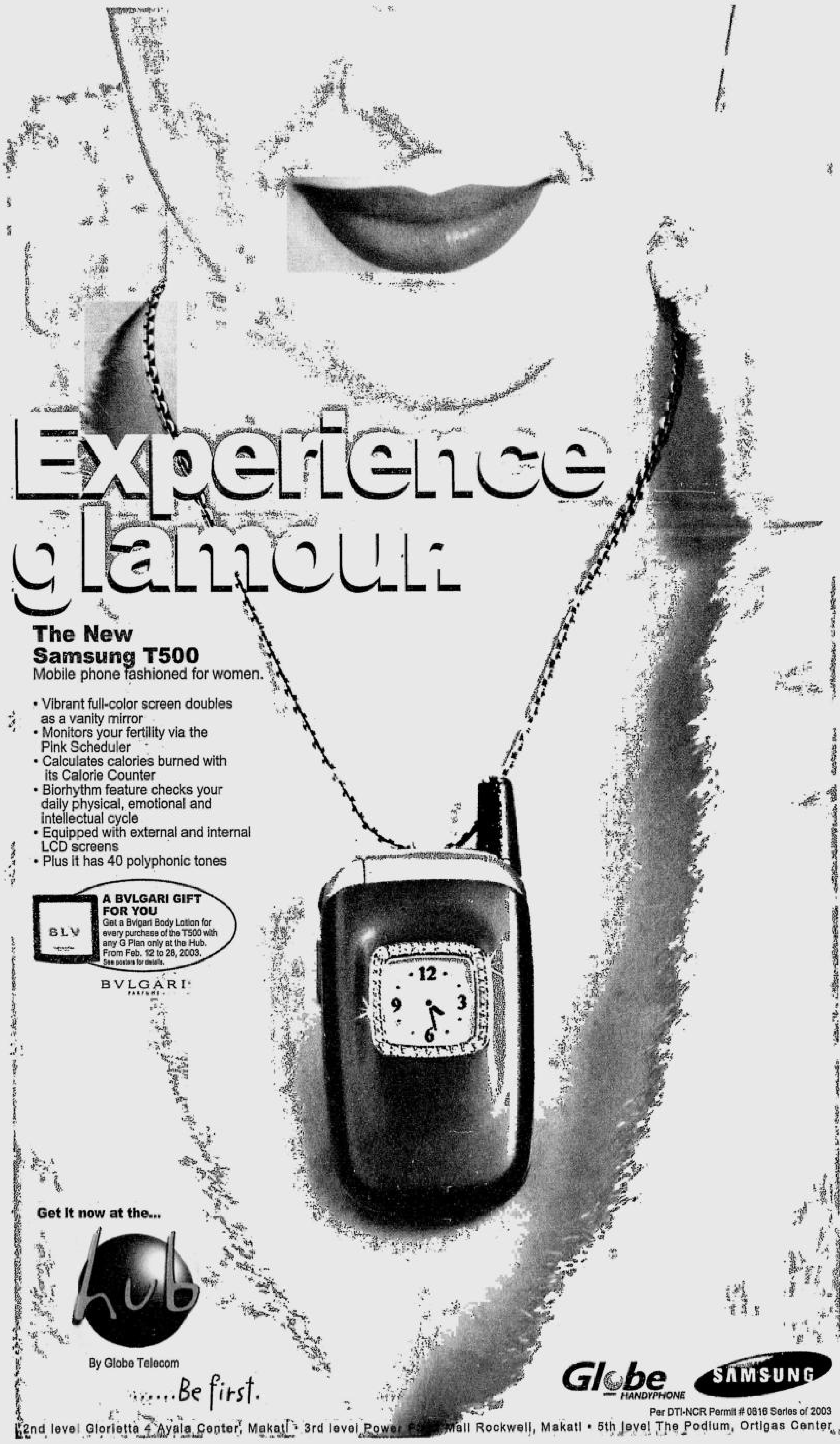
- Bananas. The banana flower has a remarkable phallic shape and is partially responsible for popularity of the banana as an aphrodisiac food.



BANANAS

- Garlic. A powerful energizer and a true panacea.
- Chocolates. Make one very passionate with increased sexual drive.
- Coffee. Arouses sexual excitement.
- Truffles. They are good for the mood, which is always a good thing.
- Champagne. It disinhibits one's shy personality.
- Oysters, scallops and other shellfish. They are shaped like sexual organs and eaten to enhance sexual desire.

Certain fruits and vegetables are also famous as stimulants of passion, such as celery and artichoke. *Vangie Baga-Reyes*



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Kisses in the kitchen

THE JOYFUL COOK

Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

THERE was a lot of clanking and clunking in what was usually a quiet kitchen. From one cupboard out came a baking pan in the shape of a teddy bear. Then a bundt pan… one for angel food cake… a large sheet pan for birthday cakes. "Where's the heart?" asked The Joyful Cook with a tinge of annoyance.

"You can always take a round cake, cut it in half, then use the two parts as 'ears' to a square cake oriented like a diamond on its serving tray. That would make you a heart cake," replied Saint Sandok, the talking spoon she inherited, trying to be helpful.

"But Feb. 14 is the only time I use my heart pan. I've got to find it or it won't be Valentine's Day for me," she said.

Shapes of the heart

"You could try something different this year," Sandok shouted over the racket.

"But everyone expects my white chiffon shaped like a heart, topped with scrumptious double cream pudding made with vanilla bean and crowned by a heap of strawberries steeped in Cointreau. I already have the berries plumping and am chilling cream to whip for the topping that is passed around."

"You could bake heart-shaped cookies with strawberry jam filling for a change and send them home with your guests. The heart's not the only shape associated with Valentine's Day. There's always Cupid and doves. Or why not a dinner designed around the sensual shapes of love?"

Suddenly the kitchen was its usual mellow mood. Saint Sandok knew he'd found an audience for a monologue.

"We all know that some aphrodisiacs like melons gained notoriety because they have reminded poets of women's breasts. Ancient Greeks thought figs look like genitalia.

"Think of all the blatantly phallic shaped edibles—eggplant, okra, bamboo shoots—considered love empowering. Bugs Bunny's carrot was a Greek love medicine; it was also vulgarly referred to as 'widow's consolation.' A synonym for the intensely aromatic truffle is 'earth's testicle.' Similarly Aztecs named the avocado *ahuacatl* from their word for 'testicle'—which is what an oyster, by the way, is said to resemble," Sandok added.

"I thought oysters figured on the aphrodisiac list because they alter their gender to suit their reproductive purpose of the moment," TJC commented. "I recall the Oyster Institute of America's motto is 'Eat Oysters, Love Longer.' The phosphorous content might be what makes it a supposed machismo aid."

Textures of passion

"Luscious, soft, creamy… those are textures associated with love and love foods. That's why the tomato was once called the

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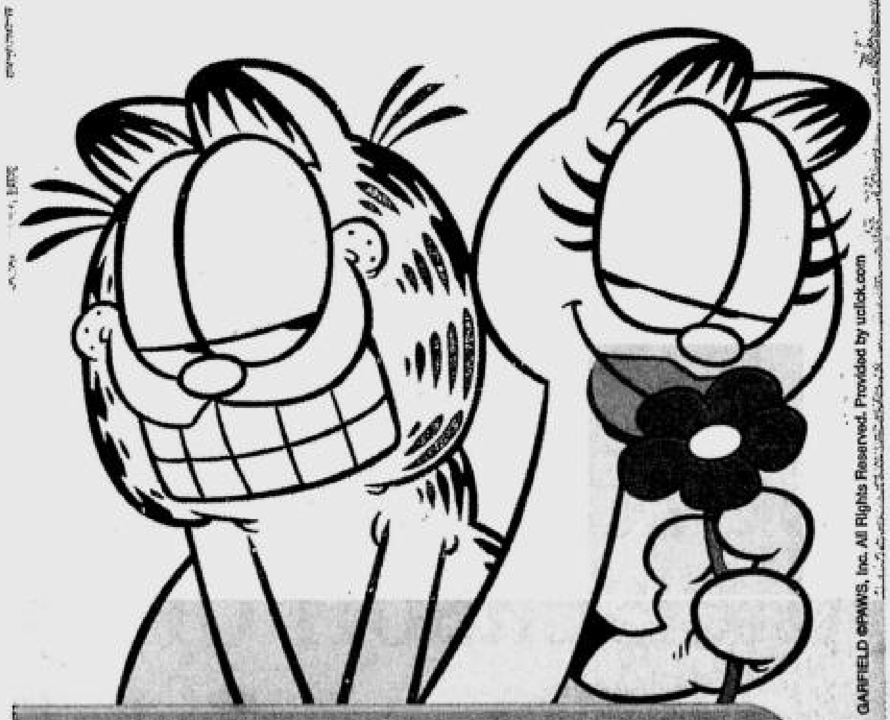

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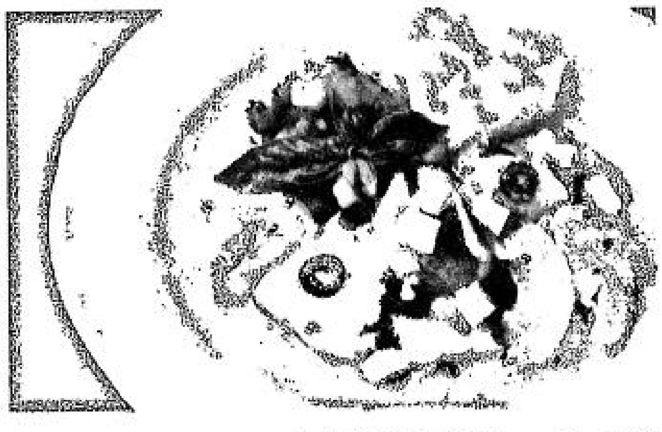
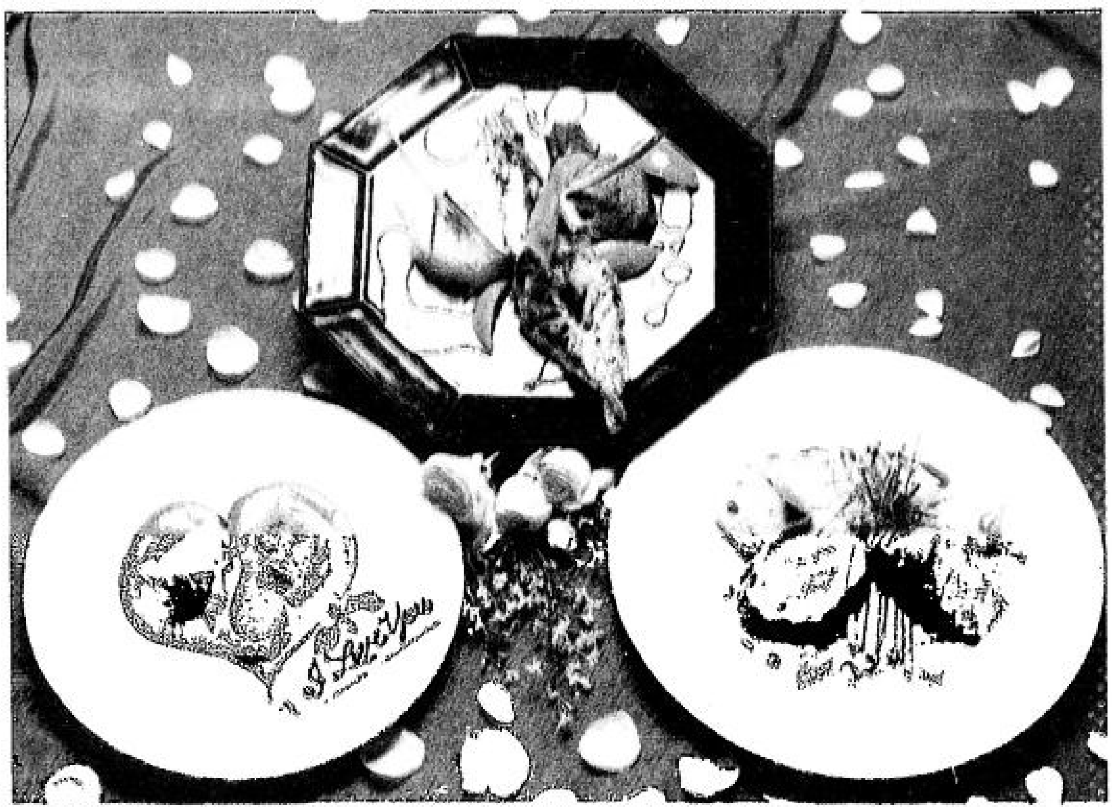


SPECIAL Valentine meal from Blue Bacon & Green Eggs

ICED Profiteroles from Aresi Restaurant



THE HERITAGE Hotel presents (clockwise from top) Prawn and Beef Duet, Salmon Serenade and Strawberry Pleasures.

Celebrating the season of hearts

DINING OUT

MAGNUM Wine Cellar Bar and Grill at Greenbelt 2, Makati, gives a free glass of Baron Philippe Rothschild Merlot wine and another glass of digestif after dinner for guests for the whole month of February. Call 757-3880 to -81.

MINGOY'S Fine Spanish Cuisine presents a special Valentine menu on Feb. 14 at Mingoy's Ortigas, Twist in Eastwood, Libis and Una Mas in Greenbelt 2. Call 637-7520/7525 (Mingoy's Ortigas); 757-3357/58 (Una Mas, Greenbelt 2); and 421-1822/23 (Twist, Eastwood, Libis).

FEAST on Miro's Valentine dishes: Chicken in Garlic Butter Sauce, Salmon Steak, Prawns Thermidor, US Sirloin Steak and Sizzling Abalone. A free glass of wine or Shirley Temple will complete your Epicurean experience. Call 687-0880 and 687-3439.

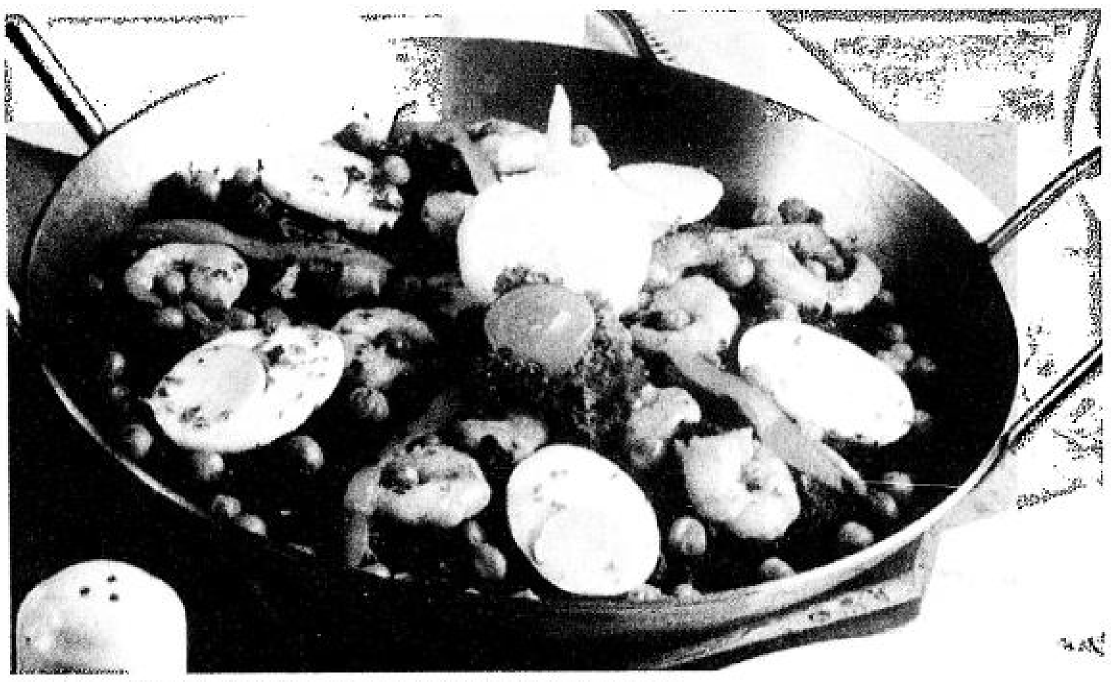
SANTIS Deli Cafe in Silang, Cavite, features Valentine treats like Spring Mesclun Salad with Perigord Scaloppini and Green Mango/Apricot Vinaigrette, Lapu-lapu Fillet and Mousse with Fresh Asparagus and Chive Beurre Blanc, Beef Tournedos, Tomato Capsicum Salsa, Gratinated Zucchini and Pilaff Rice and Surprise d'Amour. Call (046) 414-2337.

SEGAFREDO Zanetti Espresso offers a Valentine lunch/dinner menu on Feb. 13-16. This includes an appetizer, soup, salad, main course and choice of coffee or dessert. Guests may also order à la carte with popular choices such as Italian pizzas, pastas, rice dishes and desserts.

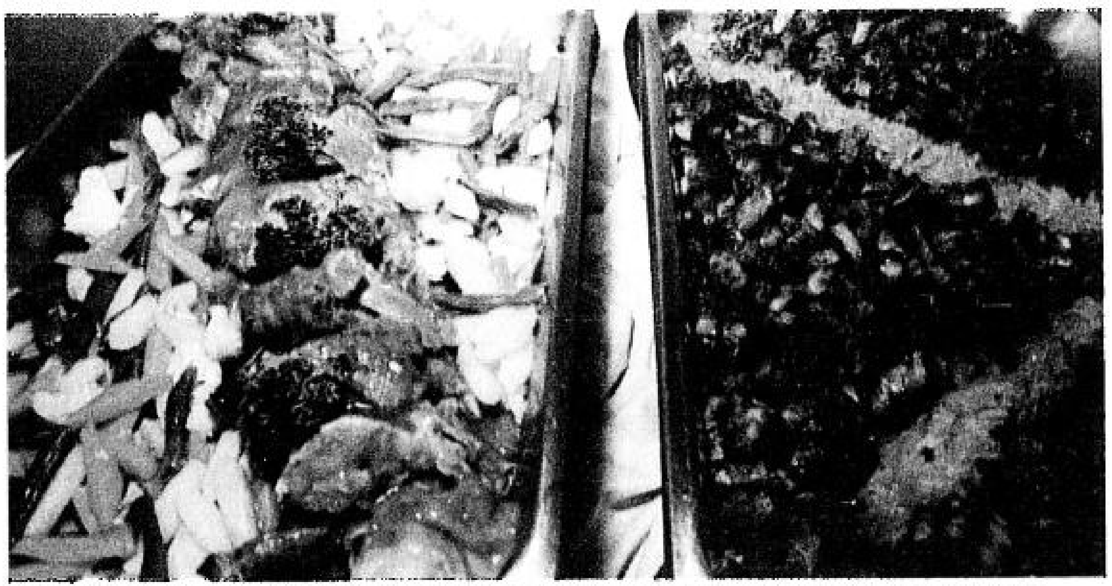
CARPACCIO Ristorante Italiano prepares Valentine offerings such as Balsamic Marinated Duck Medallion, Grilled Beef Tenderloin Steak topped with Green and Pink Peppercorn Sauce, Grilled Norwegian Salmon topped with vegetables and Italian parsley accompanied by garlic mashed potatoes and herb cream sauce. To cap this meal, there's the Valentine Surprise. Call 843-7286.

BLUE Bacon & Green Eggs makes your Valentine celebration special with a menu served with either a glass of Lindemans Shiraz Cabernet or Martini Asti plus a complementary rose for the ladies. Call 721-2717, 726-8054 or 721-7676.

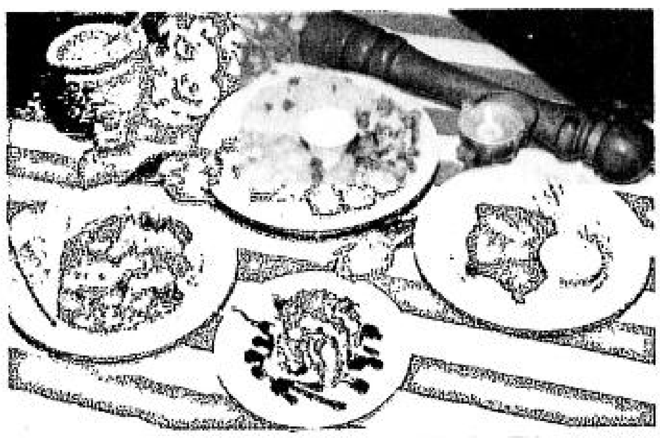
FALL in love with Casa Armas Tapas Bar y Resturante's offering on Feb. 13, 14 and 15. Avail of the special set menus that come with an appetizer, soup, paella, entree, dessert plus complimentary glasses of dessert wine (good for two). Call 897-3605 (Jupiter branch), 757-4961 (Greenbelt) or 687-3370 (Podium).



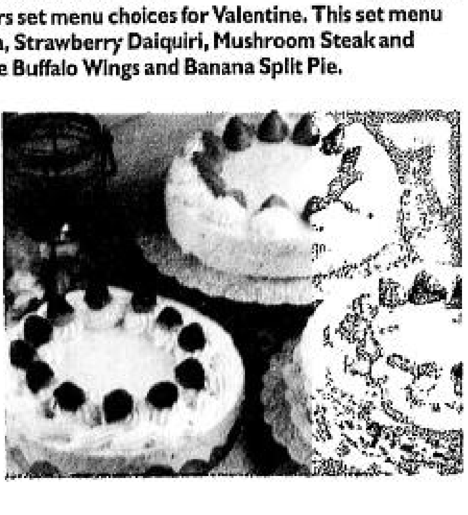
ENJOY a lasting love affair with paella at Minggoy's fine Spanish cuisine.



SAVOR Forest Grill Roasted Chicken and Grilled Liempo. The restaurant is located at 12 Jupiter St., Bel-Air IV, Makati City. Call 896-5240 or 897-7949.



T.G.I.FRIDAY'S offers set menu choices for Valentine. This set menu includes Cajun Pasta, Strawberry Daiquiri, Mushroom Steak and Mushroom, six-piece Buffalo Wings and Banana Split Pie.



CRAVINGS Restaurants and Cafés offer the Cravings Valentine cake collection for your loved ones.

ITALIANNI'S Restaurant offers special set menus for two and four on Feb. 14-16. These include an appetizer, pasta, entree, dessert and wine. Italianni's Valentine menus are available at its branches at Greenbelt 2, Glorietta IV and Alabang Town Center.

T.G.I. Friday's offers two special menu options on Feb. 13-16. Menu A includes six-piece Buffalo Wings, a choice between Mushroom Steak and Pacific-Grilled Pork Chop, Chicken and Shrimp Diablo or the Cajun Pasta, Banana Split Pie and Strawberry Daiquiri. Menu B offers Mushroom Chicken, Jack Daniel's Salmon, Inihaw na Liempo, and Fettuccine Alfredo with Chicken and Herb.

OUTBACK Restaurant features Auss'm values for-money choices like Hamburger Steak and King's Canyon Pork. Visit its branches at Glorietta IV, Libis in Quezon City and Alabang Town Center.

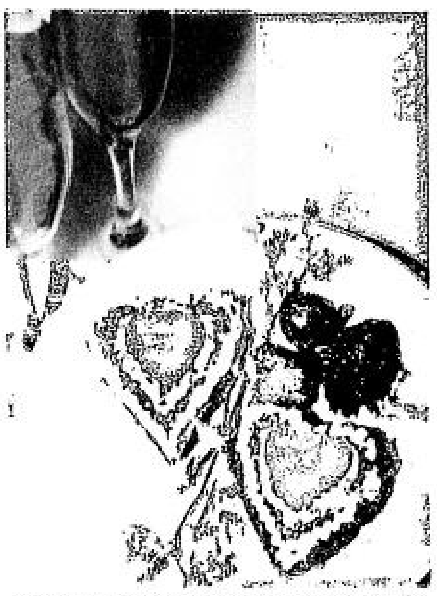
THE HERITAGE Hotel Manila's Restaurant Riviera presents a special buffet dinner on Feb. 13, 14 and 15. Indulge in Salmon Serenade and Prawn and Beef Duet and Strawberry Pleasures. Call 854-8888 local 7355.

PEARL Manila Hotel celebrates Valentine's Day with a set menu of Stuffed Breast of Chicken Cupido, Pommes Croquettes and Romeo and Juliet Delight. The dinner is priced at P500 per person, with a complimentary glass of red or white wine. Call 400-0088.

MANDARIN Oriental, Manila weaves romance on Valentine's Day with a dinner, which culminates with a holiday in Hong Kong for a lucky couple. Dinners in various restaurants prepared by the hotel's award-winning chefs are also offered. Call 750-8888 local 2400.

MAKATI Shangri-La's Lobby Lounge features a Valentine's Day International Dinner buffet while being serenaded by French-Moroccan artist Moise. Cheval Blanc offers a 4-course Valentine's Day set dinner. Call 840-0884 or 813-8888 local 7588 or 7599.

CELEBRITIES Joey Mead and Claudine Trillo with commercial models Sean Lim and Paolo Rebullida sipping wine while listening to the sexy sound of Latin American music at Magnum Wine Cellar Bar and Grill at Greenbelt 2, Makati City.



ROMEO and Juliet delight from Pearl Manila Hotel

EDSA Shangri-La's Lobby Lounge presents a dinner concert featuring Rachel Alejandro and Route 70. On Feb. 14 and 15, experience Italian Amore and the best of Cantonese, Asian and Continental fare. Call 633-8888 local 2738 or 2739.

PAN Pacific Manila features a six-course dinner at the 21/F Pacific Lounge on Feb. 14 starting at 6 p.m. The dinner comes with coffee or tea, a stem of rose for female guests and a welcome drink. Call 536-0788.

HOTEL Inter-Continental Manila's food outlets offer the following: Cafe Jeepney will serve Valentine lunch and dinner buffets on Feb. 13 -14; The Prince Albert Rotisserie, a special Valentine set menu for lunch and dinner. The Valentine menus will still be offered together with regular à la carte dishes on Feb. 15. Call 815-9711 local 7596 or 7598.

NEW World Hotel's Cafe Sampaguita offers Valentine lunch and dinner specials. This includes chocolates for the ladies and a bottle of wine for every couple. Call 536-7777.

BIANCA'S Café and Vinotek showcases a Valentine menu of Lapu Lapu Fillet and Mousse with Fresh Asparagus and Chive Beurre Blanc, or Spring Mesclum Salad complimented by Perigord Scaloppini and Green Mango /Apricot Vinaigrette, Beef Tournedos with Tomato Capsicum Salsa, Pilaff Rice and Gratinated Zucchini and Surprise d'Amour. Call 815-1359.

THE LINDEN Suites' Monsoon Restaurant and Bar offers a buffet breakfast and special set dinner for P495+. Call 638-7878.

NY Five-O introduces a fusion of Polynesian dishes this Valentine. To cap the evening, NY Five-O offers a romantic night at the Music Lounge with its New York-style piano bar. Call 373-0774.

ARESI Bar and Restaurant's Valentine set menu includes salad, soup, appetizer buffet and choice of a main dish and dessert. Call 929-3644, 927-1725, 921-0570/0269.

LE Denne Pastries offers brownies, caramel cakes, cup cakes and marble cakes for Valentine at affordable prices.They come in eight-, 16- and 48-piece packages. Call 933-3454, 0917) 344-0212 or (0917) 696-4496.

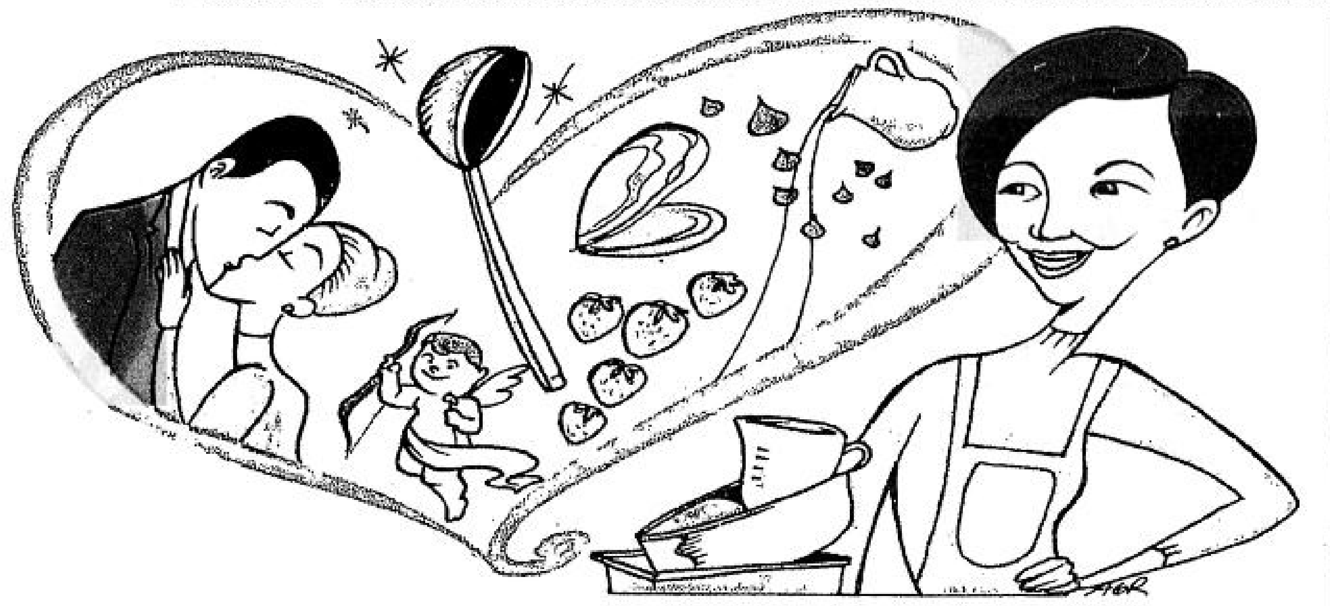


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Kisses in the kitchen

From page D1

love apple. Some culinary joys that compete for top position in sensual delight are said to remind of sexual pleasures: gulping down a fresh raw oyster, popping large caviar eggs one at a time as they nestle in the mouth, biting into buttery durian at height of season. Some even say swiping truly creamy ice cream with the tongue's tip gives them unusual pleasure," said Sandok.

"Anthropologists venture that the kiss originated way back in homo sapiens' history when a mother chewed food and transferred it with her mouth to her infant's mouth. The behavior continued into adult lovemaking until the ritual turned into two lovers pressing their lips together without food," TJC explained. "William Cane's book, 'The Art of Kissing,' describes the Candy Kiss. While some might find the idea revolting, he says, others find it appealing. It goes back to the mother-infant stage except that lovers pass something sweet to each other with their lips.

"Cane says the Candy Kiss is done with ice cream, hard candy, mints even chocolate-covered ones, champagne and chocolate candies. Once used to it, he warns, you'll savor the Candy Kiss like a good meal."

Words of romance

"Chocolates were once considered as wicked as vanilla—a plant with a vagina-looking pod," Sandok continued. "But ever since Switzerland's Daniel Peters invented milk chocolates in 1876, they have become so identified with Valentine's Day just like Venus' beloved rose. The term *sub rosa*, meaning 'in strictest confidence,' began when Cupid bribed Harpocrates, the God of Silence, with a rose to hush up Venus' love affairs.

"When polite company demands careful comportment, we still do not talk of sex straightforwardly. Some four-letter words brandished so cavalierly today were once taboo in public. So some euphemisms went beyond bedroom language into kitchen talk. Think of the old phrase 'God's cooking.' It's used in Filipino to mean the intercourse needed for procreation. While some men teased their objects of affection by inquiring if they had already tasted *ang luto ng Diyos*, the phrase was also taken seriously with no malice meant. Romantic love was discussed rather than eroticism in straight-laced times.

"Think of the names some dishes have. There's the now famous chocolate Kiss from Hershey's. But there is also the Spanish *beso*—a bite-size meringue flavored with lemon, vanilla, coffee or strawberry—and its cousin *suspiros de amor*, sighs of love."

"You've just given me a great idea, Sandok. Since I can't find the pan, I'll make heart baskets of meringue to fill with the pudding and berries. Maybe my Valentine's Day menu should have all the culinary talismans associated with Philippine weddings: honey, *panocha* or white sugar for sweetness; coconut oil for smooth relations; rice for prosperity, fecundity; and salt to stem hunger," TJC said as she pulled out her "Kiss the Cook" apron.

"Now don't forget to include *siling labuyo*. Nothing like a little fire to power Cupid's arrow and ignite the night," said Sandok, almost forgetting his honorary sainthood.

Next: Courageous cooking

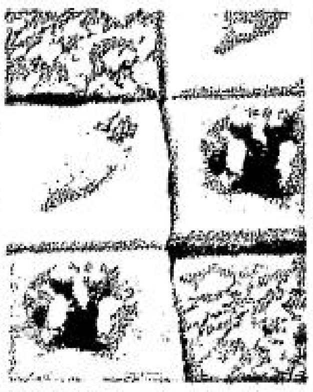
Sweetest news for sweet lovers

SWEET'N Low has just been launched in the country today. The sweetener can be used for cooking and baking, as it contains Acesulfame-K (or ACE-K) making it heat stable or able to withstand high temperatures without breaking down and producing the bitter aftertaste associated with other products.

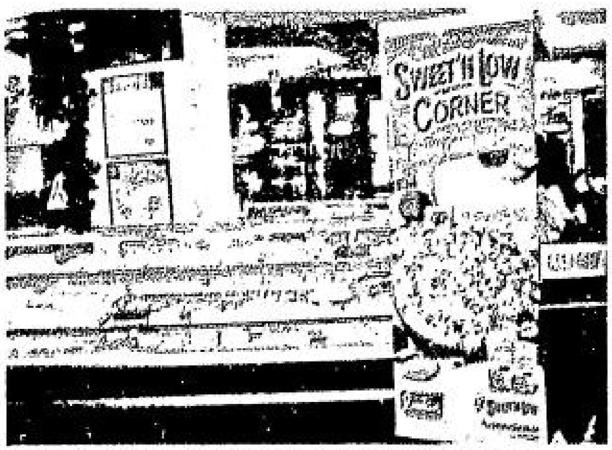
With the entry of Sweet'N Low in the Philippine market, many Filipinos can enjoy the sweetness of sugar without some of its known hazards.

Sweet'N Low is available in 100, 200 and 300 tablets in easy-to-use automatic dispensers, in sachets of 50's and 1,000's, in 40- and 80-g jars for home cooking and baking, and the economy 200-g bags at all Rustan's Supermarket branches, Landmark, Cherry Gaisano, Liberty & Grand Duty Free, Shoppersmart, Cash & Carry Supermarkets. It will also soon be available at Mercury Drugstores, GNC, Shopwise, Unimart and Makati Supermarkets.

Sweet'N Lowe is exclusively imported and distributed by Sweetlink Inc., with telefax 807-8272.



HEALTHIER options for cake and cookie lovers



SWEET'N Low corner is now open in all Rustan's Bakers Kingdom outlets.

Shop to your heart's content this Valentine's Season.

Fall in love with shopping in this season of hearts! Earn **double E-points*** for every P50 worth of credit purchase when you use your Equitable Card from **February 1 to 16, 2003.**

**Terms and conditions of the Equitable Advantage Plus Rewards Program will apply.*

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For more information, call the 24-hour Equitable Hello Service at 867-7977 (Metro Manila), or 1-800-1888-3264 (Domestic Toll-Free).

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0133, Series of 2003

33
FOOD
The Oldest Restaurant in the World
Kinilaw: the Raw and the Sour
Chocolate Treats Made Simple

Learn 32 new recipes this love month

FOOD Magazine, the country's largest selling culinary magazine, features 32 recipes for starters, main dishes and desserts in its February issue.

The recipes include Champagne Kinilaw, Quito's Burger, Tuna Steak with Mango and Tarragon, Basic Egg Pasta, Oysters Florentine, Chocolate-Dipped Strawberries and Choco-Mallow Sweetheart.

The issue also features actress Assunta de Rossi, who reveals that despite a lithe figure, she prefers carbohydrate-rich Italian dishes such as lasagna, and lots of bread and butter.

Knit fashion queen Lulu Tan-Gan is "unmasked" as a whiz at cooking and entertaining. Readers get a glimpse of her astral- and astrology-inspired blue dining room. She also shares a fresh mushroom and garlic recipe she enjoys cooking for friends.

Food's consulting nutritionist Sanirose Orbeta says the recent 2002 diabetes nutritional guidelines allow some real sugar in the daily meal plans of diabetics.

Would-be food entrepreneurs will find a directory of some of the new products and equipment introduced during the recent Asia Food Expo.

For inquiries or subscriptions, call 631-3121 or 631-9345. E-mail bpub@skyinet.net.

Get the right start in food business

GET the right preparation for a food business by enrolling in the Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts classes. Schedule of classes follows: Cooking I, Feb. 25-28, Tuesday-Friday, 1:30-5 p.m. Learn basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes. Develop techniques of de-boning chicken and fish, basic garnishing and actual preparation of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes.

Restaurant Operations, Feb. 15, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Instructions on kitchen organization, cycle menu planning, costing, cost control, purchasing, labor, payroll, inventory, etc. will be taught. There will also be lessons on proven techniques for profitable business. Lunch will be provided.

Master Waitering Basics, Feb. 15, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Lessons include basic table set-up, techniques for serving and bussing out, napkin folding and skirting, plus a bonus lesson on cocktail drinks mixing.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday to Saturday) at the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 892-1185/5011 local. 108, or e-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.

LASERLIGHT Hair Removal

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NOW **PAY-PER-VISIT:** check out these amazing prices...

OR UP TO 30% DISCOUNT

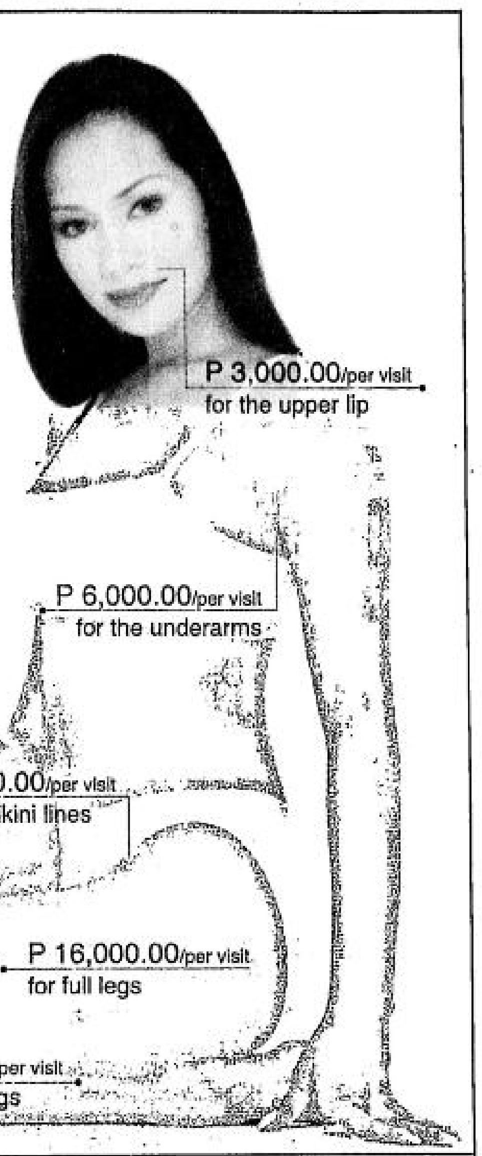
for PRE-PAID PROGRAMMES!

This is it! Your chance to get rid of the unsightly, unwanted hair on your upper lip, underarms, legs and bikini lines. **LaserLight Hair Removal, the only FDA-approved treatment for permanent hair reduction, is now available at a very low price on a pay-per-treatment basis or up to 30% discount if you enroll for a full programme!**

How could something so great be so affordable? Because Facial Care Centre wants you to experience how easy, hassle-free and effective hair removal can be with LaserLight - now so fabulously affordable at Facial Care Centres. Why would you want to go anywhere else for your hair-free experience?

LaserLight is suitable for any unwanted hair, anywhere on your body.
Call Facial Care Centre NOW for LaserLight.

For a limited time only from February 12-17, 2003.

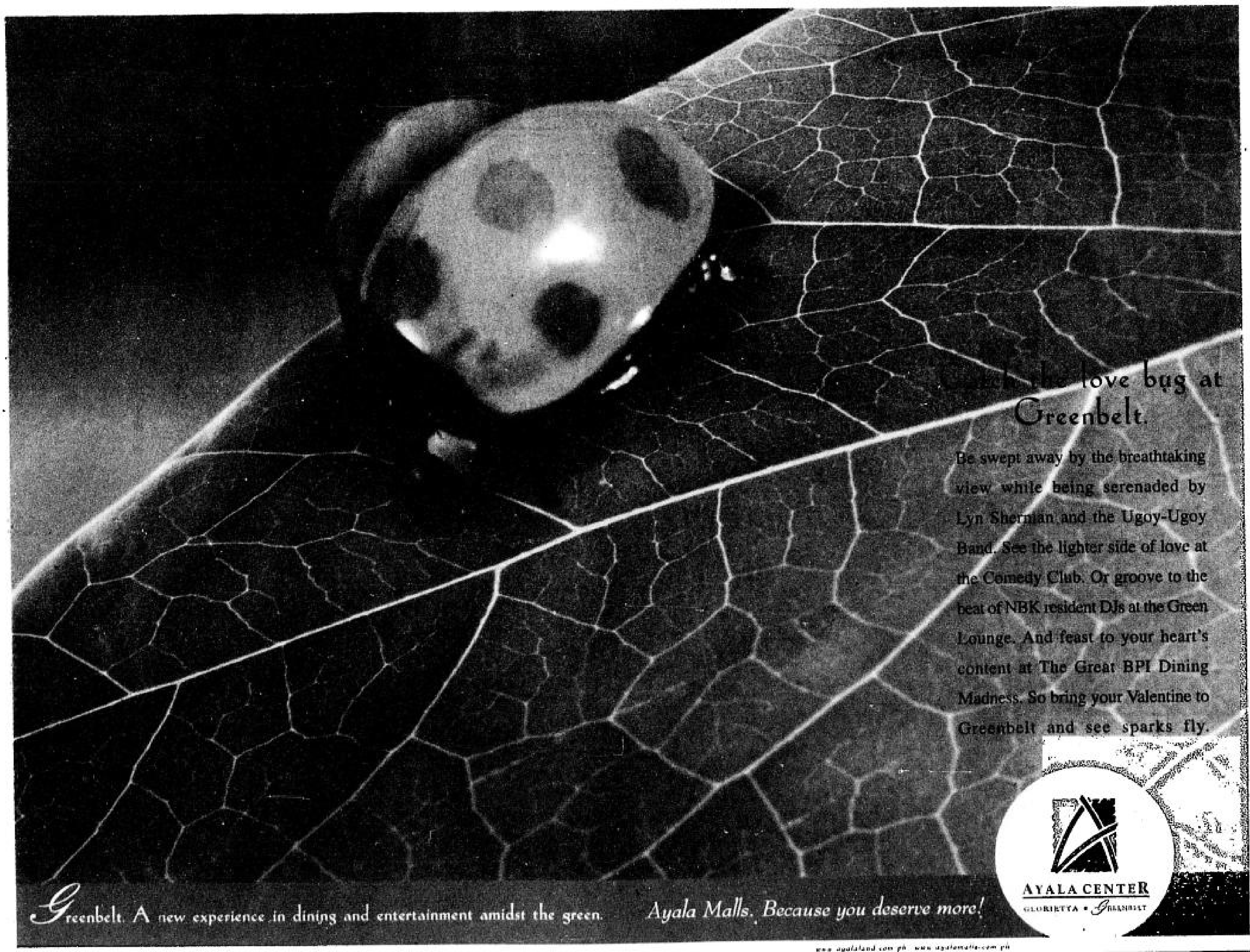


MAKATI	ORTIGAS	QUEZON CITY	SHAW	ALABANG	BINONDO	CONGRESSIONAL	PAMPANGA	CEBU
816-1259	687-2196	372-6633	534-7701/02	842-1144	243-8138/39	920-7938	961-3404/08	233-7631
815-3121	687-2197	372-6634	717-0076	809-9583	243-8602	920-7992	860-2663/64	233-7633/35
815-3123	631-3007 • 631-3045	410-3709 • 410-3710		850-4577	243-9895	920-8064		

Facial care centre

Per DTI-NCR Permit #0540 Series of 2003

MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SAT. (8 AM - 5 PM)



Catch the love bug at Greenbelt.

Be swept away by the breathtaking view while being serenaded by Lyn Sherman and the Ugoy-Ugoy Band. See the lighter side of love at the Comedy Club. Or groove to the beat of NBK resident DJs at the Green Lounge. And feast to your heart's content at The Great BPI Dining Madness. So bring your Valentine to Greenbelt and see sparks fly.

Greenbelt. A new experience in dining and entertainment amidst the green. *Ayala Malls. Because you deserve more!*

AYALA CENTER
GLORIETTA • Greenbelt

www.ayalaland.com.ph www.ayalamalls.com.ph

Valentine dates at Greenbelt

Comedy Club @ Greenbelt Mall with Jon Santos and Candy Pangilinan	Feb 12	7pm	Greenbelt 1 Cafe Row
Green Lounge with NBK DJs Manolet Dario, Adrian Cuenca, and Juno Oebanda	Feb 14	9pm onwards	Greenbelt 2
Lyn Sherman & Ugoy-Ugoy Band	Feb 14	8pm	Greenbelt 3 Park
The Great BPI Dining Madness	Feb 21 onwards		Greenbelt 2

NBK BAILEYS Shell Velocity

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Tastes

Recipes for loverly month

EROTIC CUISINE. (clockwise from top) Bulalo, Ginisang Patola, Balot a la Pobre, Adobo Camaro, Fried Adobo Pugo and Gatang Langka

THIS February, the month of lovers, Cabalen includes dishes reputed to be aphrodisiac in its P220 buffet.

Balot ala pobre, adobong camaro, fried *adobong pugo, ginisang patola* with *misua at utak ng baboy, gatang langka* with dried fish and *bulalo* with *mais* have been added to the buffet. Drink of the month is Cabalen Love Shake, consisting of watermelon, melon and mango.

Visit the website at www.cabalenrestaurant.com

Balot a la pobre

5 pcs *balot*
2/3 c cooking oil
2 tbsp garlic, crushed
½ tsp whole black pepper, ground
1/8 c soy sauce
1 pc laurel leaf
2 pcs *sili labuyo*, sliced
1/8 c cooking oil
1 tsp rock salt

Wash *balot*. Put in a clean casserole. Pour water about six inches above the eggs' surface. Bring to boil for one hour. Remove cooked *balot*. Soak immediately in tap water to cool. Peel cooked *balot*. Put in clean bowl, including the sauce. Add vinegar, soy sauce, ground black pepper, laurel leaf, salt and diced *labuyo*.

Sauté garlic until golden brown. Separate half of fried garlic and set aside. Add marinated *balot*. Bring to boil for two minutes. Cook in wok over low fire. Continue simmering for 20 minutes until done. Taste, then serve.

Adobo camaro

1 ½ c camaro
½ c cooking oil
2 tbsp garlic, crushed
¼ c onion, sliced
1 c tomato, sliced
¼ c vinegar
¼ tsp whole black pepper, ground
1 tsp rock salt

Clean *camaro* (crickets). Remove wings, feet and head. Set aside. Peel and crush garlic. Peel and slice onions. Wash and slice tomatoes.

In a clean container, combine clean *camaro*, vinegar, ground black pepper, salt and 1 tbsp garlic. Bring to boil until sauce dries up. Set aside. Sauté 1 tbsp garlic until golden brown. Add onions and cook until wilted. Then add sliced tomatoes and cook until mushy. Stir. Add marinated *camaro*. Boil for 30 seconds. Reduce fire. Continue simmering until sauce dries up.

Ginisang patola with misua and utak ng baboy

5 pcs *patola*
¼ c cooking oil
1 tbsp garlic
¼ c onion
½ c pork brain
¼ c *patis*
1 c *misua*
10 c water

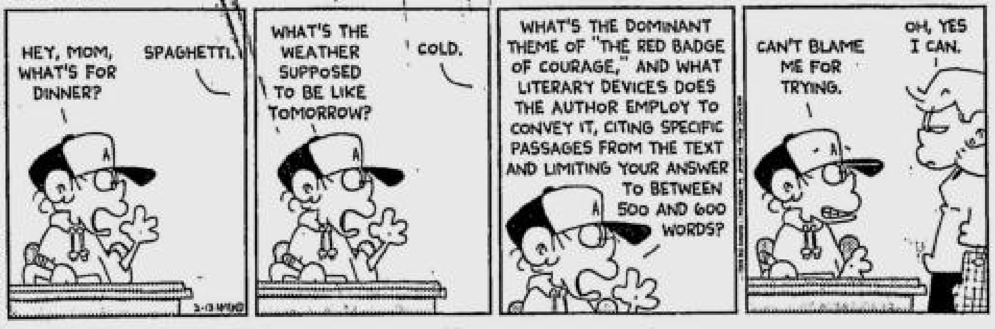
Wash and drain *patola*. Peel and slice into thin round shapes. Set aside. Peel and crush garlic. Peel and slice onions. Chop pork brain.

Sauté garlic until golden brown. Add onions and cook until wilted. Add *patis* and pork brain. Stir. Simmer for three minutes. Add *patola*. Simmer for three more minutes. Add *misua*. Stir. Continue simmering for three minutes. Taste and serve.

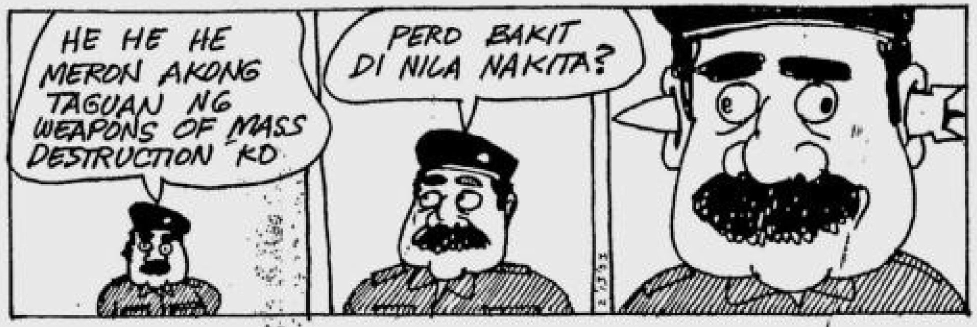
Cartier

Double C rings · Cartier Boutique · 2/F Rustan's Makati · www.cartier.com

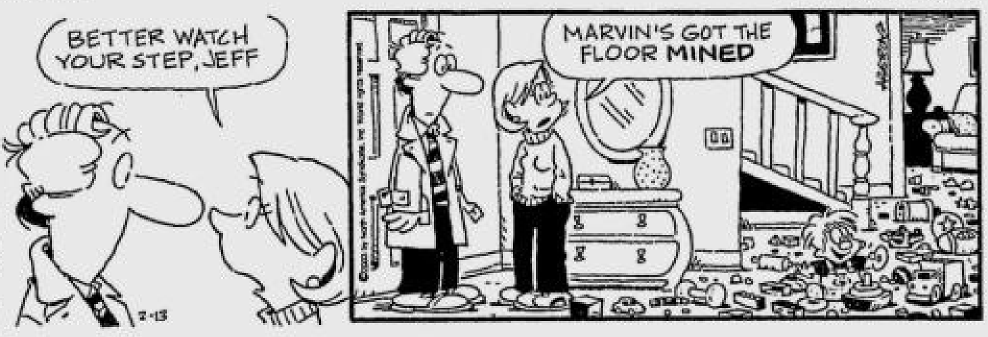
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


HEY, MOM, WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
SPAGHETTI.
WHAT'S THE WEATHER SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE TOMORROW?
COLD.
WHAT'S THE DOMINANT THEME OF "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE," AND WHAT LITERARY DEVICES DOES THE AUTHOR EMPLOY TO CONVEY IT, CITING SPECIFIC PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT AND LIMITING YOUR ANSWER TO BETWEEN 500 AND 600 WORDS?
CAN'T BLAME ME FOR TRYING.
OH, YES I CAN.

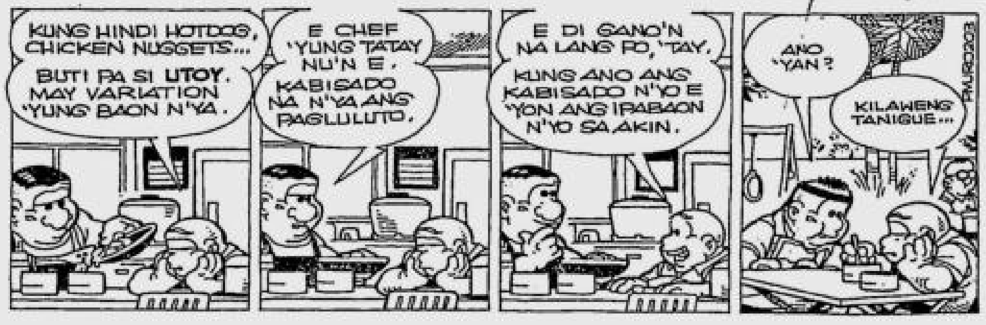
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HE HE HE MERON AKONG TAGUAN NG WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION KO
PERO BAKIT DI NILA NAKITA?

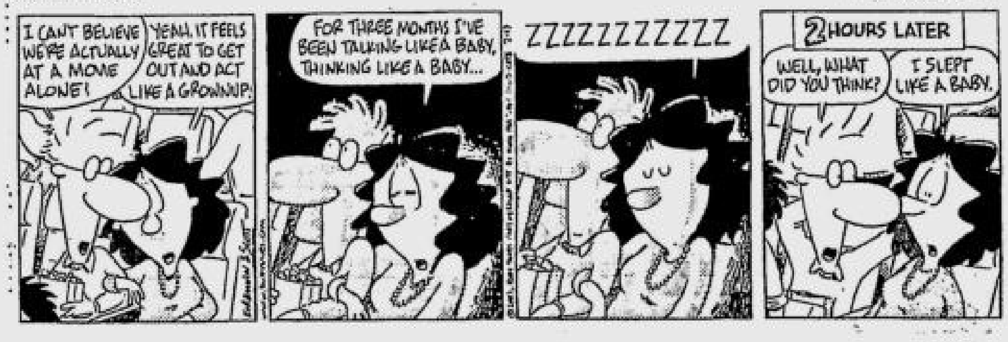
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BETTER WATCH YOUR STEP, JEFF
MARVIN'S GOT THE FLOOR MINED

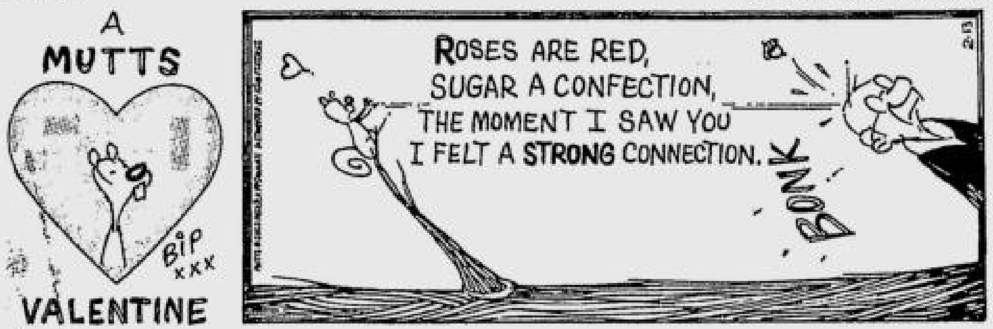
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUNG HINDI HOTDOG, CHICKEN NUGGETS...
BUTI PA SI UTOY. MAY VARIATION 'YUNG BAON N'YA.
E CHEF 'YUNG TATAY NU'N E. KABISADO NA N'YA ANG PAGLULUTO.
E DI GANO'N NA LANG PO, 'TAY.
KUNG ANO ANG KABISADO N'YO E 'YON ANG IPABAON N'YO SA AKIN.
ANO 'YAN?
KILAWENG TANIGUE...

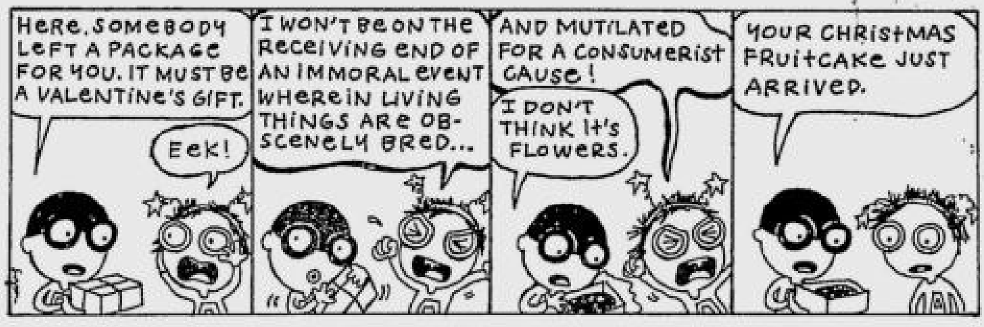
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE ACTUALLY AT A MOVIE ALONE!
YEAH. IT FEELS GREAT TO GET OUT AND ACT LIKE A GROWNUP.
FOR THREE MONTHS I'VE BEEN TALKING LIKE A BABY, THINKING LIKE A BABY...
ZZZZZZZZZZZ
2 HOURS LATER
WELL, WHAT DID YOU THINK?
I SLEPT LIKE A BABY.

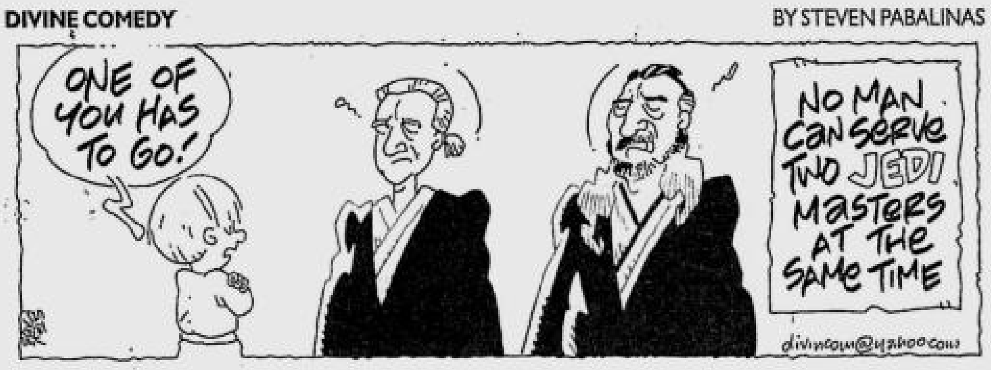
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A MUTTS VALENTINE
BIP XXX
ROSES ARE RED,
SUGAR A CONFECTION,
THE MOMENT I SAW YOU
I FELT A STRONG CONNECTION.
BONK

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Here, SOMEBODY LEFT A PACKAGE FOR YOU. IT MUST BE A VALENTINE'S GIFT.
EEK!
I WON'T BE ON THE RECEIVING END OF AN IMMORAL EVENT WHEREIN LIVING THINGS ARE OBSCENELY BRED...
AND MUTILATED FOR A CONSUMERIST CAUSE!
I DON'T THINK IT'S FLOWERS.
YOUR CHRISTMAS FRUITCAKE JUST ARRIVED.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ONE OF YOU HAS TO GO!
NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO JEDI MASTERS AT THE SAME TIME
divincom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Peter Gabriel, Stockard Channing, Jerry Springer, George Segal

Happy Birthday: Your desire to get things done properly will cause you to try to do everything yourself. Romance can set the pace for a highly energetic and engaging year. This is your year to think and then take action—in that order. Your numbers are 4, 19, 20, 27, 39, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let your worries stand in the way of getting things done. Once you get started you will find it easy to follow through. Focus on the positive, not the negative.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may be a little stubborn and pushy today. Problems with a friend or relative will stem from discussions concerning beliefs. Avoid fanatical individuals.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Money and emotional matters may be intertwined today. Learn to say no to those too eager to spend your hard-earned cash. You control your finances.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Voice your concerns rather than letting your hostility grow today. Once you lay all your cards on the table you will be able to get to the bottom of your problems and ease your stress.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): It's time to give your surroundings a bit of a facelift, with the OK from your housemates. This is a good day to look around for a special item for your home.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Keep your eyes open for a good project that could lead to financial gains. Catch yourself if you start to become negative in your responses toward others. Being positive will always bring better results.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't expect anything for nothing today. Do your own thing and refrain from relying on anyone. Reserve judgment on those who are secretive. You don't have all the facts.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It's time to try new things. The experiences you have today will lead to all sorts of interesting prospects. Take action now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): New projects will lead nowhere today, so just relax and enjoy yourself. Lots can be learned if you are having fun and sharing ideas with people.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): This may not be most enjoyable day for you, but it will be one that brings resolve. You may have to face your own demons and be honest and open with yourself as well as others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Consider the changes that you can make to your living quarters. Real estate opportunities are present. Check out joining an organization that serves those in need.

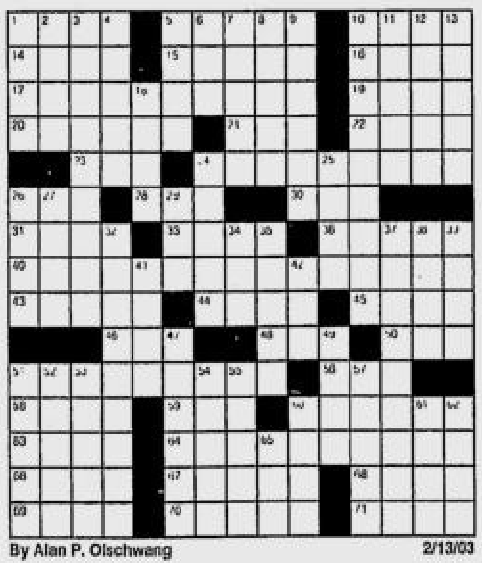
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The more time you spend dealing with other people and what they are experiencing, the less time you will have to dwell on your own mishaps. Physical activity will release stress.

Birthday Baby: You will be a take-charge person who always has something to say and lots of ideas to share. You will be interested in everything and willing to do whatever is necessary in order to enjoy what life has to offer.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Former P.M. of Israel
5 Makes ready, for short
10 Weeps
14 Singer Guthrie
15 "The Double Man" poet
16 Free of fat
17 Lucky guess?
19 "__ kleine Nachtmusik"
20 Government in power
21 Sock's end
22 Explorer Tasman
23 John's Yoko
24 "Mask" star's glove?
26 Night flier
28 Eur. country
30 Bro or sis
31 Play opening
33 Even scores
36 Sheriff's band
40 Theme of this puzzle
43 Slowly, in music
44 Obligation
45 Grow weary
46 Maris, casually
48 College Trojans
50 Bonkers
51 Small sip of a vegetable soup?
56 CIA forerunner
58 Yoked pair
59 Burger holder
60 Stimulate
63 GM make
64 Didn't conform?
66 20% of CCLXV
67 Type of drum
68 Use acid for art
69 Squabble
70 Uses a keyboard
71 Mach+ jets

DOWN
1 Bryn __
2 Canal of song
3 Obtained dishonestly
4 "The Kiss" sculptor
5 Top of the head
6 Capek play
7 Head of Hollywood
8 Black tea
9 Expressions of contempt
10 Fulton's Clermont, e.g.
11 Small antelope
12 Intelligence test pioneer
13 Small silvery fish
18 Air pollution
24 Wept
25 Little drinks
26 Weep noisily
27 Feel still
29 Numerical ending
32 Along the way
34 Collector's French coin
35 Stopped slouching
37 Beachwear
38 Poet Teasdale
39 Checked out
41 Tugboat sound
42 Tryon and Cobb
47 Lose it all
49 Part of FDIC
51 Instruments
52 Eurasian primrose
53 News services
54 Cloudless
55 Remove a lid
57 Pumps' bottoms
60 Singing brothers
61 Faction
62 Old English letters
65 Mine find



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

2/13/03

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	I	P	E	R	■	B	L	A	B	■	L	A	Z	E
A	D	A	G	E	■	R	I	C	A	■	I	C	E	D
L	E	M	O	N	■	E	O	N	S	■	L	U	R	E
M	A	D	■	D	I	A	N	E	K	E	A	T	O	N
■	■	A	M	E	N	D	■	■	E	X	C	E	S	S
C	O	W	A	R	D	■	M	A	T	E	■	■	■	■
O	R	B	S	■	I	D	O	L	■	S	C	R	A	P
U	S	E	S	■	A	I	S	L	E	■	L	Y	L	E
P	O	R	E	S	■	R	E	A	P	■	O	A	T	S
■	■	■	■	P	A	T	S	■	C	A	N	N	O	T
A	B	S	U	R	D	■	■	R	O	D	E	O	■	■
D	A	N	N	Y	D	E	V	I	T	O	■	N	O	D
A	L	O	T	■	O	R	A	L	■	P	I	E	T	A
P	E	R	I	■	N	I	N	E	■	T	R	A	I	T
T	R	E	E	■	S	E	E	D	■	S	A	L	S	A

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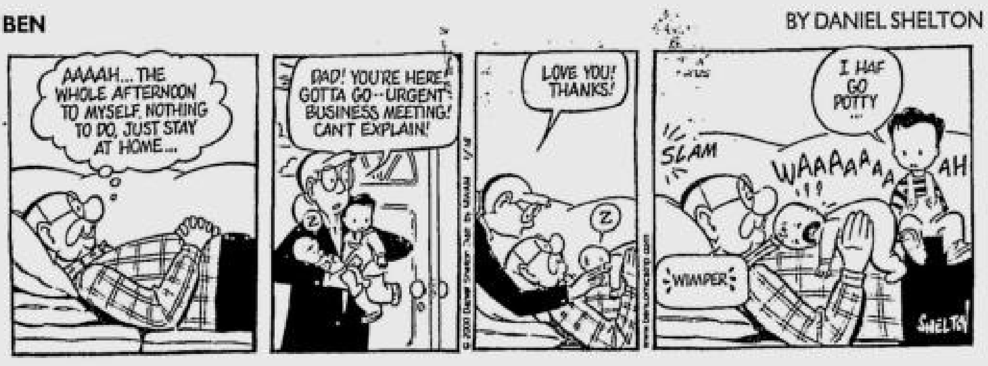
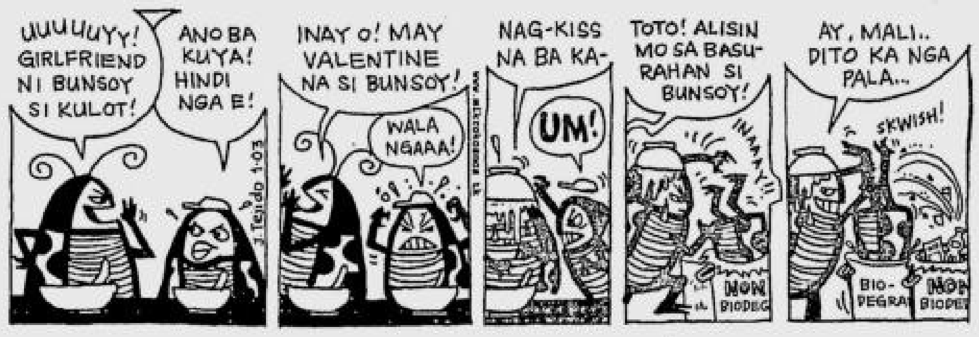
2/13/03

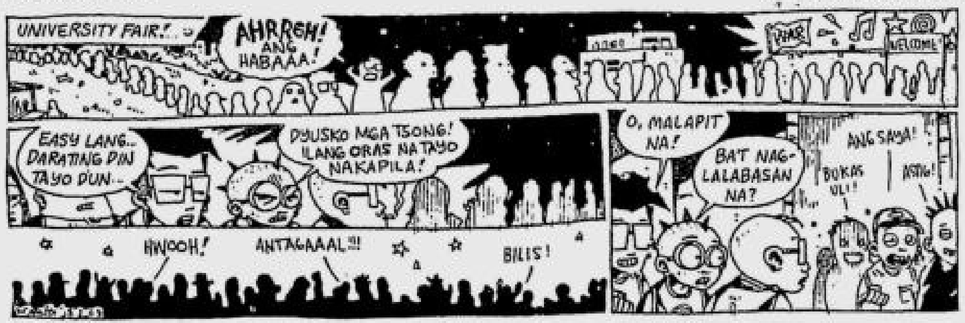
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


AAAAH... THE WHOLE AFTERNOON TO MYSELF. NOTHING TO DO, JUST STAY AT HOME...
DAD! YOU'RE HERE! GOTTA GO--URGENT BUSINESS MEETING! CAN'T EXPLAIN!
LOVE YOU! THANKS!
SLAM
I HAF GO POTTY
WAAAAAAAAAH
WIMPER

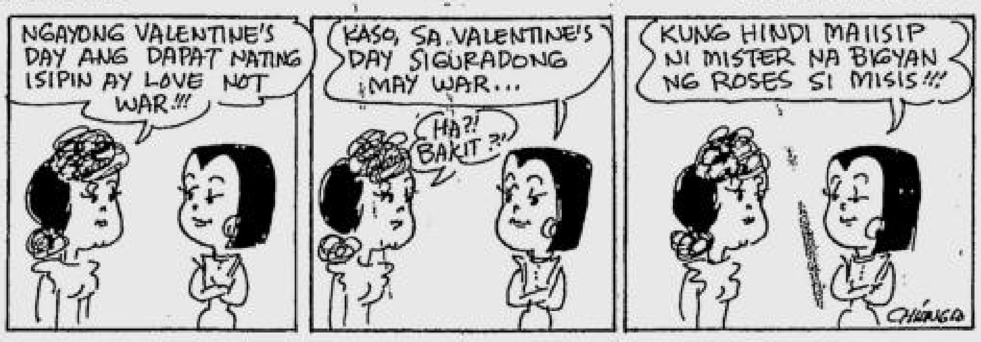
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


UUUUUYY! GIRLFRIEND NI BUNSOY SI KULOT!
ANO BA KUYA! HINDI NGA E!
INAY O! MAY VALENTINE NA SI BUNSOY!
WALA NGAAA!
NAG-KISS NA BA KA-
UM!
TOTO! ALISIN MO SA BASURAHAN SI BUNSOY!
INAAAY!!
AY, MALI.. DITO KA NGA PALA...
SKWISH!
NON BIODEG
BIO-DEGRA

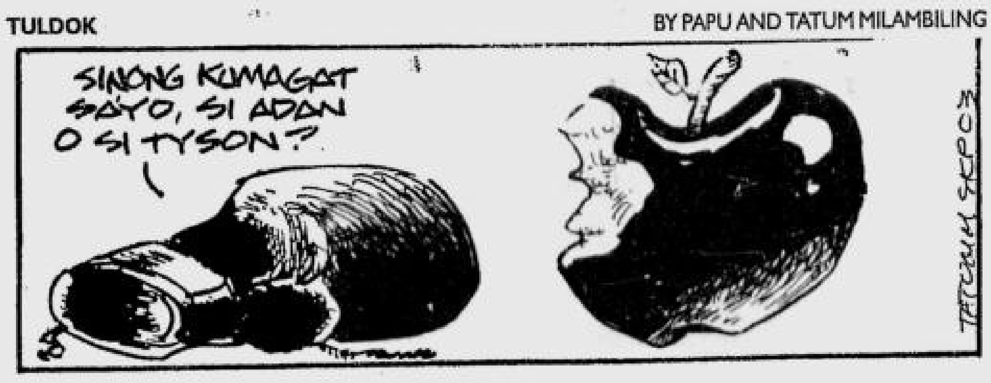
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


UNIVERSITY FAIR!
AHRRGH! ANG HABAAA!
WELCOME
EASY LANG.. DARATING DIN TAYO DUN...
DYUSKO MGA TSONG! ILANG ORAS NA TAYO NAKAPILA!
HWOOH!
ANTAGAAAL!!!
BILIS!
O, MALAPIT NA!
BAT NAG-LALABASAN NA?
ANG SAYA!
BUKAS ULI!
ASTIG!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NGAYONG VALENTINE'S DAY ANG DAPAT NATING ISIPIN AY LOVE NOT WAR!!!
KASO, SA VALENTINE'S DAY SIGURADONG MAY WAR...
HA?! BAKIT?!
KUNG HINDI MAIISIP NI MISTER NA BIGYAN NG ROSES SI MISIS!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SINONG KUMAGAT SAYO, SI ADAN O SI TYSON?

KIM Atienza and wife Felicia, Irene Martel Francisco, Maritel and husband Dori Shani

BABETH Aquino and Nedy Tantoco

KIM Atienza and wife Felicia, Sen. Loren Legarda and Antonio Alindogan

RANDY HORMILLOSA

New restaurant branch opens

CABALEN opened recently its second franchised outlet at the new Harrison Village Square Mall, Manila, owned by Irene Martel Francisco.

The new outlet can sit more than 100 and the function room, suitable for private and corporate affairs, is good for 30 people.

Special packages that will suit every budget are available.

Cabalen offers Kapampangan specialties like *inihaw na hito* with *burong isda at mustasa, sinigang na sugpo, nilasing na hipon, kare-kare, paksiw na lechon, morcon, ginataang kuhol*, fresh *lumpia, camaru* and *inihaw na pusit*. Soups include *bulalo sa mais, sinigang na ulang sa kamias* and *sinigang na tiyan ng bangus sa bayabas*.

Other Cabalen branches are in West Avenue, Quezon City; 4/L SM Megamall; Glorietta 3, Ayala Center; 2/L Robinsons Place Manila; 2/F SM City North, EDSA; Katipunan, Blue Ridge; 2/F SM City, Manila; Brick Road area, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall; and Level 1 (near main entrance), Robinsons Starmills Pampanga.

For franchising, call 913-5528 or 911-1584. For catering services, call 647-5088/4988. Visit the Cabalen website at www.cabalenrestaurant.com

CABALEN offers Kapampangan dishes

RANDY HORMILLOSA

CABALEN'S new outlet can seat more than 100 people.

TEMPTING buffet spread

DESSERT includes *halo-halo, leche flan* and *tibok-tibok*

RANDY HORMILLOSA

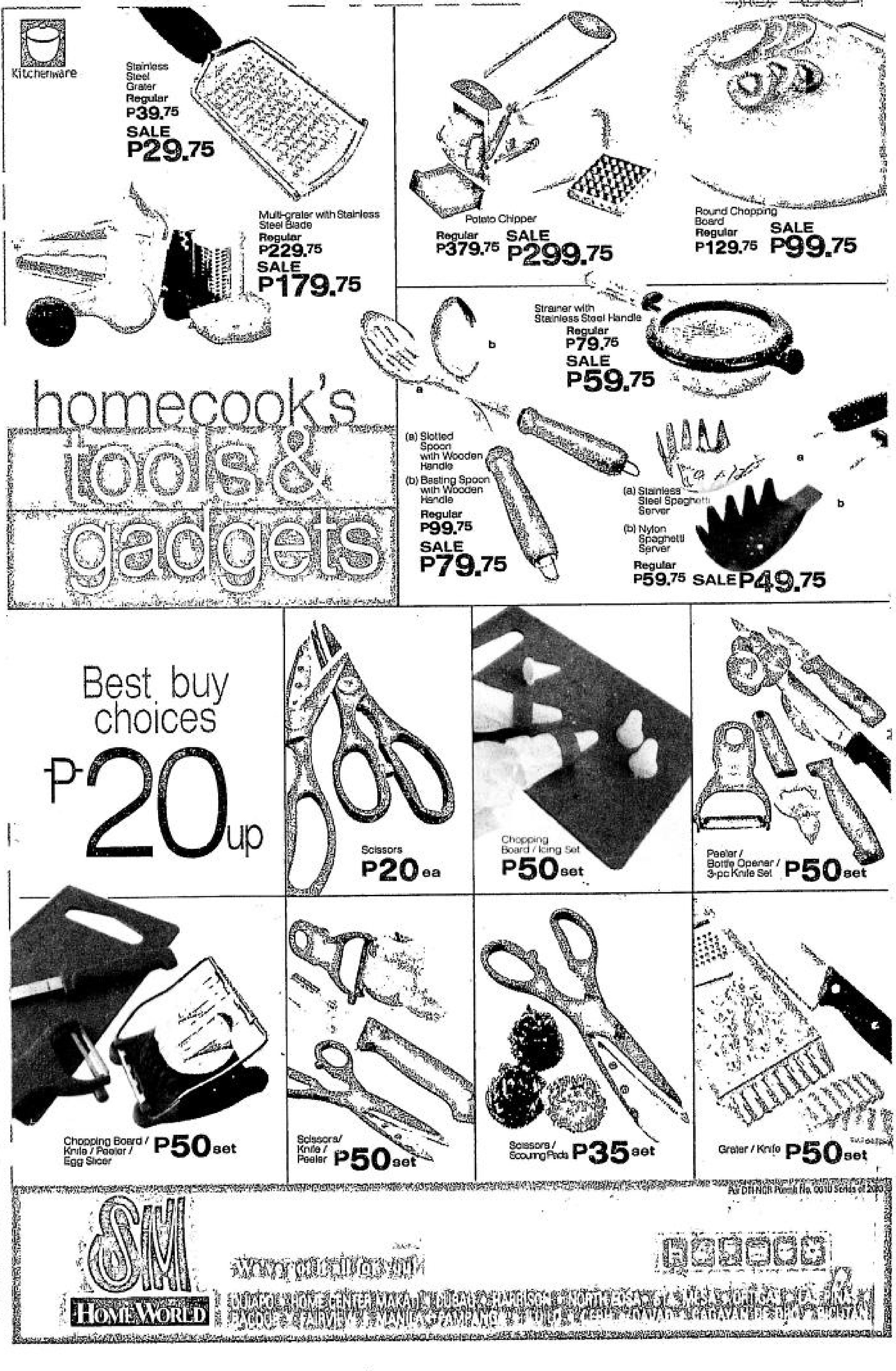
BUTCH Bartolome, Chit Juan, Reena Francisco, Joaquin Zamora and Lyndah Bartolome

ANTONIO Alindogan, Oscar Rodriguez and Malou Rodriguez; behind them are Rose Lazaro, Cory Alindogan and Justice Lolong Lazaro

OPHIE Clemente, Irene Martel Francisco, Norma Sanders, Benny Clemente and Don Sanders

KEENA de Jesus, Christine Ong, Patsy Francisco and Aurora Tanseco; behind them are John de Jesus and Robert Francisco

IAN Tiongson, Paolo Martel and Kenny Quintal



Kitchenware

Stainless Steel Grater
Regular P39.75
SALE P29.75

Multi-grater with Stainless Steel Blade
Regular P229.75
SALE P179.75

Potato Chipper
Regular P379.75 SALE P299.75

Round Chopping Board
Regular P129.75 SALE P99.75

Strainer with Stainless Steel Handle
Regular P79.75
SALE P59.75

homecook's tools & gadgets

(a) Slotted Spoon with Wooden Handle
(b) Basting Spoon with Wooden Handle
Regular P99.75
SALE P79.75

(a) Stainless Steel Spaghetti Server
(b) Nylon Spaghetti Server
Regular P59.75 SALE P49.75

Best buy choices P20 up

Scissors P20 ea

Chopping Board / Icing Set P50 set

Peeler / Bottle Opener / 3-pc Knife Set P50 set

Chopping Board / Knife / Peeler / Egg Slicer P50 set

Scissors/ Knife / Peeler P50 set

Scissors / Scouring Pads P35 set

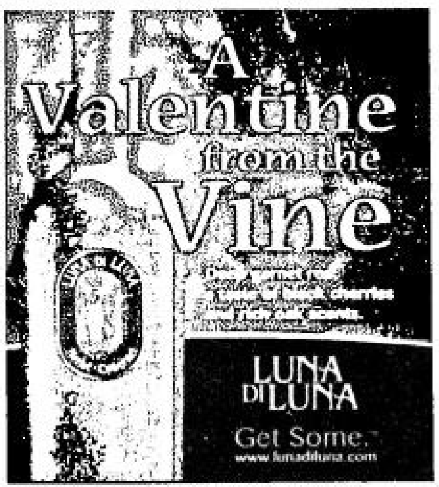
Grater / Knife P50 set

SM HOME WORLD

[illegible]

Benefits of raising free-range chickens

New strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria have developed in chickens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THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

A LETTER from reader M. Flores of Gapan, Nueva Ecija inspired this writer to visit a poultry farm in Teresa, Rizal that specializes in free-range chicken. He wants to raise this type of chicken in his backyard for home consumption because he has been deeply disturbed by stories of antibiotics and growth-promoting chemicals that are widely used in the poultry industry today.

He has valid reasons to worry. Commercial poultry raisers use antibiotics and growth-promoting chemicals to keep fowl healthy and make them grow faster than usual. As a result, new strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria have developed. Besides, store-bought chickens are known to harbor e-coli bacteria, salmonella, and campylobacter, the leading causes of food poisoning. According to the latest issue of Consumer Reports, there's also a deadly kind of avian flu that comes from imported and smuggled chicken. The widely read international publication explains how these fast-evolving bacteria developed stubborn resistance to a wide range of antibiotics (the same drugs used on people).

In a seminar I attended at the poultry farm owned by Antonio P. Inocencio, other health hazards caused by market-bought chickens were disclosed. He revealed a brand that was banned abroad because it reportedly contained carcinogen. It is widely used in the local industry, he said.

The poultry raiser advised consumers to choose dressed chicken wisely. If the meat is smelly, slimy, and pale, don't buy it because it can cause food poisoning. According to Inocencio, unexplained fever, gastro-intestinal ailments, and body aches and pains are symptoms of chicken food poisoning.

BROWN Sasso chickens are free-ranging and drug-free.

Here are more tips: Wash the chicken thoroughly prior to cooking. Clean hands, aprons and kitchen tools with soap and water after use. Cook meat very well to kill the bacteria.

Poultry recommendation

Inocencio recommended Sasso chicken for backyard raising, as well as for commercial poultry. Originally from France, the free-range and organically raised chickens have adapted very well to local conditions. These are known for being hardy, resistant to diseases, easy to raise, and economical to grow. Their meat is known for its fine texture and good taste.

We saw the brown chickens running around the enclosed grazing area. They ate grass, insects, corn leaves, grains and drug-free mix supplied by a manufacturer who specializes on organic poultry feed. The chickens were then herded in a shelter where each one occupied a square foot of resting place.

We also had the chance to indulge in this naturally raised chicken. The meat was tender and it tasted like our native chicken. What's more, the broth of the chicken dish was clear. Market-bought chicken usually produces unclear broth because of the artificial coloring of antibiotics in their feed and drinking water.

Sasso tastes best after two months, which is its marketable age, according to Inocencio. To prove that raising Sasso is profitable, Inocencio disclosed that a small farmer raised 400 birds in a 470 square meter area. After two months of raising seven-day-old chicks, he sold them and earned from P30 to P70 per bird every 60 days.

Available at the farm right now are live or dressed chicken, eggs and chicks. A 21-day-old chick costs P70 and a week-old chick, P35. Call the Sasso farm at 630-6123 or 630-6053.

Consumer complaints

W. Daniel of winsomedaniel@hotmail.com related the following experience to warn other consumers patronizing laundry shops. He said that the owners of a laundry establishment in Barangka Drive have ignored the loss of his clothes. He wrote, "The owners said the staffers who went to my house to pick up the clothes were no longer connected with their company. The trouble is, I don't remember how many items they got because they forgot to issue the service order slip upon pick- up.

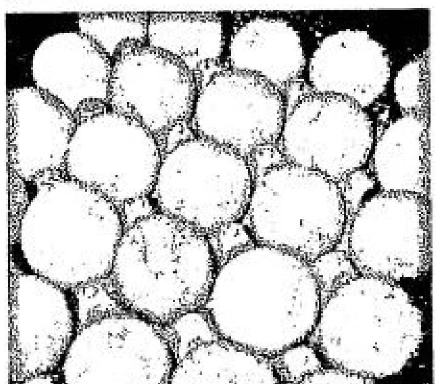
"The store has order slips (I used to be a regular customer) saying management is not liable for any damage resulting from the normal process, and loss of buttons or anything left in pockets of items sent to them for washing and drying. They also state that the accepted items are at owner's risk, and that the store shall not be held responsible for shrinkage and fading due to customer neglect. It doesn't say anything about items lost by the store."

Ironically, the store's motto is "We care for the clothes you wear."

We hope that S. Ronnie of ronniess@yahoo.com already got the CD radio-cassette he ordered last December during the HSBC's credit card "super offer rewards." He paid P2,000 for the 15,000 reward points he had accumulated. The item was not available when he claimed it between Dec. 22 and the first week of January. He was told to come back on the last week of January or first week of February. When he called up HSBC, the credit card representative passed the blame to SM.

"The sad part was, HSBC already included the P2,000 in my December billing," Ronnie complained.

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph


EGGS from organically raised chickens

Dewberry
Hot Shots
KFC
Bucket Family Meal?
Because you save P129!
To upsize, just add P40.
Get 8pcs. Chicken, 4 Regular Fix-Ins, 4 Rice, 4 Regular Drinks, 8pcs. Dewberry Cookies and Large Hotshots for only P459.00. Upsize and get Large Drinks and Extra Large Hotshots. Because KFC gives more value to your family get-together.
Dewberry
Kapag Fried Chicken
Promo period Feb. 5 to March 22, 2003
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0450 Series of 2003

children's hour

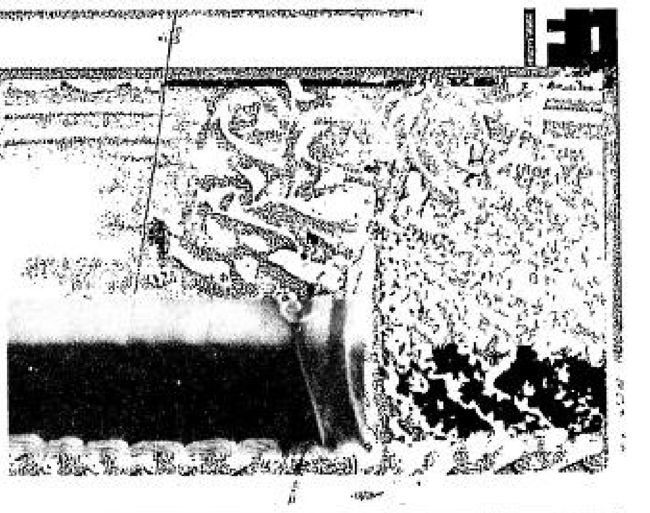
For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pi_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

IFESTYLE

WHAT'S INSIDE

The old world charm of baking by hand

p F2



It's for kids, too

WHO says Valentine's Day is for lovers only? Children likewise deserve to be part of the celebration of the hearts. In fact, the Children's Hour is using this opportunity to get additional funding to support its children and youth causes.

Children's Hour is a global fund-raising campaign that calls on individuals and companies to donate one hour's worth of their earnings for programs dedicated to children and youth.

It was launched in the country in 1999 and again this year to champion the cause for millions of Filipino children in need.

To date, Children's Hour in the Philippines has raised about P40 million from donations given by companies, employees and private individuals.

The fund is invested in carefully selected projects addressing child abuse and deprivation, as well as health care and education programs.

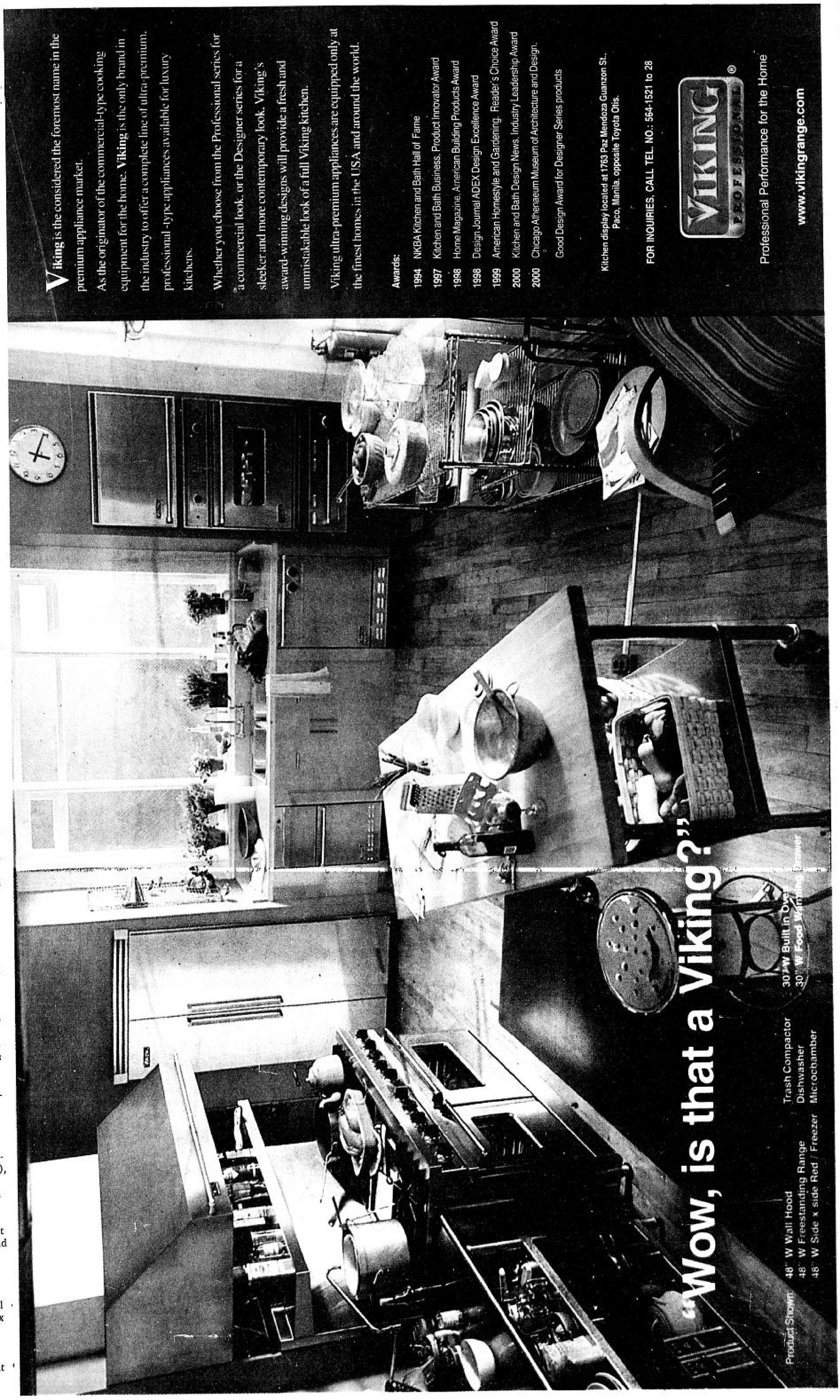
On Valentine's weekend, several restaurants have generously agreed to donate part of their proceeds for the benefit of Children's Hour. Milkyway Café will give 20 percent of its sales to the cause.

About 5 percent of the sales of Cork Wine Cellar and Grill (Rockwell and ABS-CBN), Magnum Wine Cellar and Grill (Greenbelt), Beluga Bistro and Pravda Wine Bar will also be given to the Children's Hour.

Until Feb. 15, Burgoo (all branches) will pledge a percentage of its sales to the cause, as well as Cibo (all branches), Café Bola (Araneta Center), Mangan (all branches), Kitchen (all branches), Ebun (Greenbelt), Figaro (Powerplant Mall, Rockwell) and Cafe Havana (Greenbelt).

For inquiries on how you can help Children's Hour, call 894-5620/1663, fax 813-4487 or e-mail childrenshour@ayala.com.ph.

Visit its website at www.childrenshour.tk.


Viking is the considered the foremost name in the premium appliance market.

As the originator of the commercial-type cooking equipment for the home, **Viking** is the only brand in the industry to offer a complete line of ultra-premium professional-type appliances available for luxury kitchens.

Whether you choose from the Professional series for a commercial look, or the Designer series for a sleeker and more contemporary look, Viking's award-winning designs will provide a fresh and unmistakable look of a full Viking kitchen.

Viking ultra-premium appliances are equipped only at the finest homes in the USA and around the world.

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1997 Kitchen and Bath Business, Product Innovator Award
1998 Home Magazine, American Building Products Award
1998 Design Journal ADEX Design Excellence Award
1999 American Homestyle and Gardening, Reader's Choice Award
2000 Kitchen and Bath Design News, Industry Leadership Award
2000 Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, Good Design Award for Designer Series products

Kitchen display located at 1763 Paz Mendoza Guanzon St., Paco, Manila, opposite Toyota Otis.

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Dishwasher
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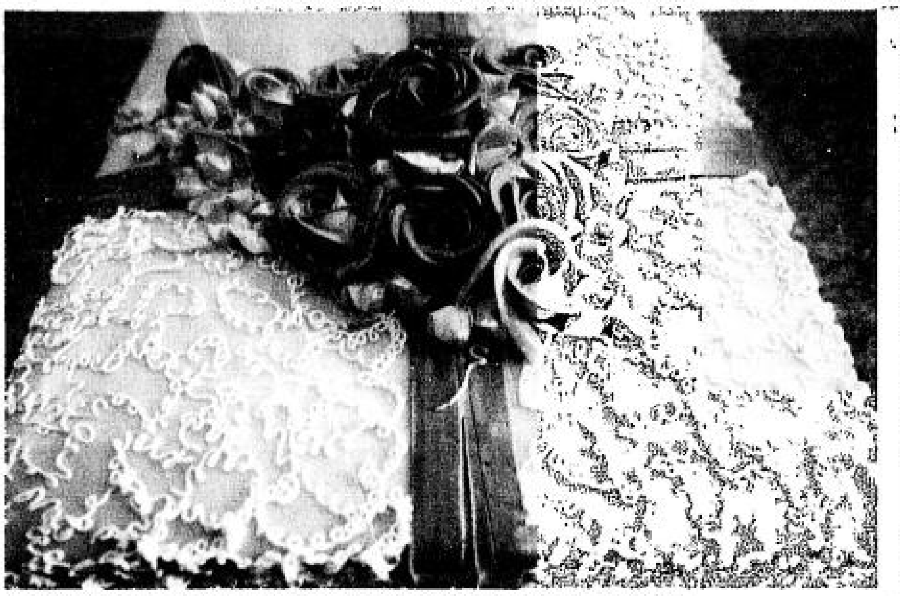
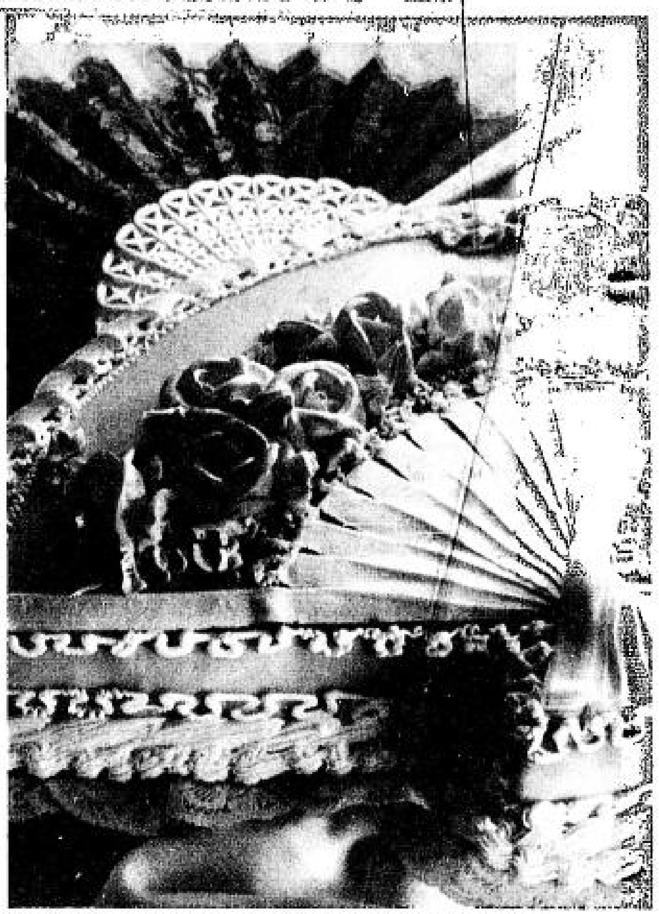

CHIFFON cake topped with lace-like icing and freshly-made butter roses

ALL NATURAL. No emulsifiers, preservatives, additives and artificial flavors


CARAMEL icing is poured while still hot over chiffon cake.

The old world charm of baking by hand

Text by Elsie Kalaw Santos
Contributor
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

IN THE LAST seven years, my friend and former colleague Gina Navarro has become the author of a special birthday treat for me.

It is a box of Estrel's Caramel Cake, a chiffon cake under a blanket of glossy caramel, bedecked with clusters of perfectly shaped butter roses in shades of pink, blue and yellow. The cake is sooo-o pretty, I always hesitate to cut through the flawlessly set light brown icing . When I do, I set aside roses that may be in the way of the knife—to be devoured when no one is looking.

Estrel's cake has never disappointed over these years that I've savored it on my birthday or some other special occasion. It is consistently soft and fine in texture, flavorful with just a tinge of sweetness and never too creamy. Often I got my cake with the icing still warm and just beginning to settle. All Estrel's cakes are baked just hours before they are claimed.

Home-baked appeal

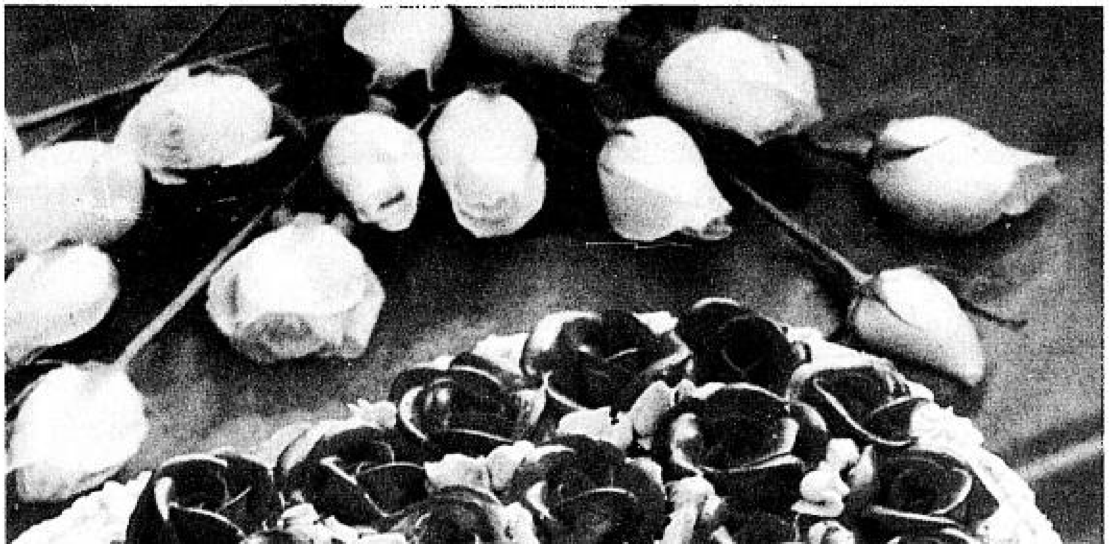
Estrel was Gina's aunt Estrella Ylagan, the eldest sister of her mother, Alice Ylagan Navarro.

Tita Estrel had a keen interest in cooking even as a child, a trait not uncommon among the Ylagans. Her cooking skills were honed under the tutelage of master cooks, including the late Maria Ylagan Orosa, an aunt. Most people now remember her for her patriotism during the Japanese occupation (for which she was executed by enemy forces), but Maria Y. Orosa was better known while she was alive for her culinary skills and love for good food. She is credited for having developed the Orosa oven, a charcoal-based clay oven (*palayok* is how Alice refers to it) that Estrel initially used to bake her cake.

By hand

That Estrel's caramel cakes consistently please the eyes and the palate is no accident. Rather, it is a product of craftsmanship, which is at the core of every folk art.

After the last war, bakers did not have much to work with except their hands, and that was how Estrel made her caramel cakes. She patiently beat the cake batter manually and then continuously stirred the caramel icing as it was cooking over just the right amount of heat.


BUTTER roses are red, sweet, perfectly-shaped and just right for Valentine's Day.

Most taxing was the manual creaming of the butter and sugar to make the butter roses. The mixture had to be beaten till the sugar was completely dissolved and a stiff consistency was achieved. Her persistence resulted in a formula for caramel icing and butter roses that had the perfect blend and flavor, much improved from the original chiffon cake recipe that she copied from a box of cake flour. In 1949, very confident in the goodness of her cake, she set up a bakeshop on Lepanto Street in Manila.

HEIRESSES. Alice Navarro (center) and her daughters Joy (left) and Gina make sure cakes continue to be made Tita Estrel's way even in two separate kitchens.

Even when electric mixers became regular appliances in kitchens, Estrel did not use them because electronic beating of the mixtures would not produce the soft and fine texture of her cake.

"Tita Estrel never dreamt to be big. She didn't want a commercial bakeshop that would go into mass production. She knew that if she went into mass production, she would be forced to use preservatives and emulsifiers on the cake," recalls Gina.

Nothing but the best

And this is one feature of Estrel's cakes: Real eggs, milk and butter are used in favor of emulsifiers or artificial eggs and flour that facilitate baking in big volumes. The cakes also have no preservatives. That's why Estrel's cakes are best eaten on the day they are baked. If refrigerated, Gina says, the cakes would last another two days. The cakes also have no additives or artificial flavorings; their flavors are the natural result of the mix of real, high-quality ingredients.

No one better understands the uncompromising stance of Tita Estrel in the kitchen than Alice Navarro and her daughters, Joy, Gina and Mia, all of whom underwent rigorous training in the kitchen under Tita Estrel in her own time.

Estrel's Caramel Cake (tel. 372-2965) is now managed by Alice with the help of Joy and Gina.

> Each of Estrel's cakes is made from real, fresh eggs, milk and butter and six hours of grace

It is primarily in deference to Tita Estrel's passion for perfection and high standards that Estrel's cakes are not mass produced. There has been no change in the recipe and, in spite of the high cost of ingredients, no attempt to skimp on quality.

Gina attests that into each cake goes seven super jumbo eggs, two bars of Anchor butter, and a significant dose of full cream milk.

Two kitchens

The cakes are now baked in two kitchens. The first is located on the second floor of the Laperal Apartments along Recto Avenue fronting San Sebastian College. This has been the base of Estrel's Caramel Cake since the 1950s. Many *suki* still pick up their cakes from this outlet.

The second kitchen, located in the family residence at 54 Scout Tobias (corner Scout Limbaga) in Quezon City, has been in operation only in the last two years. In the same address now stands a smart-looking, homey shop where clients pick up their orders.

Six hours' labor

The shop's staff of 14—10 in the Scout Tobias kitchen and four in the Recto kitchen—have all been trained in the arduous process of making the caramel cake. The process is, Gina admits, painful to the hands and arms, especially for beginners.

In spite of the tiring process, the family boasts of having the loyalty of several of their staff. Their eldest baker, Floring Carillo, now 72, has been with the bakeshop for the past 51 years and refuses to retire. Floring's batchmates were in the employ of the bakeshop until they passed away.

Producing one cake is labor-intensive, explains Gina. "Everyone in our staff has to be skilled, otherwise we cannot produce the cake of Tita Estrel. There are times we reject the output of our staff because it is not at par with Tita Estrel's standards, " says Gina.

It takes a total of six hours to produce one 8 x 12 inches cake. This includes the beating of the batter. Then there's the cooking of the caramel icing and pouring it while still hot on the cake. The angle of pouring has to be accurate so that the icing naturally flows on the entire surface and on all sides of the cake. This natural flow of the icing accounts for the glossy finish of the caramel topping.

When the caramel topping is done, the decorators start to pipe out pastel shades of butter roses. These roses cannot be stocked or they'd melt. They are made only when the cake is ready.

Several times, the Navarro women have had to assess the wisdom of ignoring the use of electric appliances to facilitate and therefore increase production. However, they always come up with the same answer: Tita Estrel never wanted a big business and her cake should always have the home-baked appeal.

PASTEL roses are made of butter only after the cake is baked.

TASTEMAKERS

CLASSICAL flavors and sounds at Holiday Inn's Mediterranean Food Festival

Gourmet food trip set to classical music

HOLIDAY Inn's executive chef Martin Kohler, Mike Villanueva, marketing manager of Fly Ace Corp. and Gino Marinas, the food and beverage director of Holiday Inn Manila, are mixing together classical flavors and sounds for a week-long Mediterranean Food Festival to be held at Manila's Grand Dame of fine dining, the Holiday Inn Manila's, the Rotisserie.

The festival, which runs from Feb. 12-21, is a gourmet food trip designed to transport patrons to the Middle East, Southern Italy, Southern France, Greece and Turkey. Serenading food travelers on Feb. 13 will be members of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

The festival is part of Fly Ace Corp.'s Mediterranean Getaway Dining Club, an ongoing program that was created to expose the Philippine public to authentic flavors from that region.

The Mediterranean Getaway Dining Club is sponsored by Pietro Coricelli premium Italian olive oil, Federici Authentic Italian Pasta, Doña Maria's juicy olives and capers, and Doña Elena's Portuguese sardines and Spanish anchovies, all of which are authentic Mediterranean ingredients used throughout the festival in its most memorable dishes.

Call 526-1212.

EMILIO and Pinky Garcia with Lloyd Joven

VINCE Arellano, Danielle Arellano, Randy Cabañgon and Karen Joven

Loftier dreams at 2

RANDY Cabangon Chua, Lloyd Joven, Ian Tiongson and Vince Arellano recently celebrated year two of Loft 216 in Blue Ridge, QC. Family and friends who toasted to the success of their favorite hangout include: Dianne dela Fuente, Karen Joven, Daniele Arellano, Emilio Garcia with wife Pinky, Therese Singson, and Keith Peralta. Call 647-8113.

French Baker in Bicutan

THE FRENCH Baker recently opened in SM City Bicutan. The opening makes The French Baker SM City-Bicutan branch its 25th store in Metro Manila, Pampanga and Metro Cebu. It also serves fresh fruit juices, St. Dalfour's organic tea, Tchibo coffees and cooked-to-order meals.

TEQUILA Joe's Morato franchisee Leoncio Gosiaco, Archie Rodriguez, franchisee Dr. Gap Legaspi, Griffith Go and TJ's executive chef Robby Goco

ROBBY Goco, Archie Rodriguez, TJ's Malate franchisee Mike and Nameeta Dargani

Tequila Joe's new outlets

DOUBLE cheers to Tequila Joe's for opening its fifth and sixth branches recently in Tomas Morato and at the 2/F of Robinsons Place Mall in Malate.

Guests who attended the event included Tequila Joe's executive chef Robby Goco, Archie Rodriguez, TJ's Malate franchisee Mike and Nameeta Dargani, Ernesto H. Maceda and Chavit Singson with franchisees Leoncio Gosiaco, Dr. Gap Legaspi and Griffith Go.

Nouvelle cuisine demo series

MAKATI Shangri-La's executive chef Christopher Romine, executive sous chef Thomas Figovc and executive pastry chef Xavier Castello will demonstrate nouvelle cuisine dishes to aspiring chefs and homemakers, like Pan-Fried Foie Gras with Caramelized Mango for appetizers, Asian Barbecue Rack of Lamb with Crushed Sweet Potato, Baby Bok Choy with Chinese Black Bean Jus for entree and Chilled Papaya Soup with Passion Fruit Sorbet for dessert.

At the end of the session, participants will get to eat the demo dishes for lunch.

Classes will be held Feb. 22, March 22, April 26 and May 24.

Fee for the entire course is P5,000 and P1,100 for individual classes. Price is inclusive of lunch at Cheval Blanc.

Call 840-0884 or 813-8888 locals 7588/7599.

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MECHANICS:

I. THE COMPETITION
The Century Tuna "Culinary Meet 2003" is a cooking competition open to all residents in the Greater Manila Area (GMA). The competition has two (2) major divisions:

A. Amateur Division - open to home-makers, non-professional cooks, enthusiasts, etc. not currently employed in the food industry.
B. Student Division-open to students presently enrolled in Hotel and Restaurant Management and related courses such as Food Technology and Nutrition; not working as part-time employee in the industry

II REQUIREMENTS
• Send an original recipe (not previously entered in any contest, publication or exhibit) using Century Tuna in oil or water as the main ingredient.

• All recipes must also make use of at least one of the following products: Hunts Tomato Sauce, Kraft Cheesemelt, Kraft Mayo, Home Pride Pasta, Jolly (canned vegetables, soups & cooking oil)), Pillsbury All-Purpose Flour & Cornstarch.

• Recipe must be typewritten in double-spaced format on a white letter-size bond paper and printed in two (2) copies.

• Entries must be sealed in a white envelope together with a label of any of the following Century Tuna variants: Century Tuna Flakes in Vegetable Oil, and Hot & Spicy; Century Tuna Solid in Vegetable Oil and Water; Century Tuna Chunks Spanish Style in Vegetable Oil and Water.

Entries must be mailed to:
EVENT VISIONS, INC.
P.O.Box 2243, Makati Central Post Office, 1262 Makati City

III. COMPETITION THEME AND PARTICIPANTS
A. Amateur Division:
TUNA PASTA TUNA or CENTURY TUNA RICE TOPPINGS
- composed of one (1) participant per entry
DEADLINE OF ENTRIES: March 7, 2003

B. Student Division
Category 1: APPETIZER PLATTER
(6 kinds of appetizer with 5 pieces each) - composed of a single team with one (1) member assigned to execute and three (3) other members to assist in the presentation

Category 2: TURNOVERS AND POTPIES
Composed of a single team with (2) members
DEADLINE OF ENTRIES: February 25, 2003

Note: Only one (1) team per category and per school is allowed to join.

IV. GRAND FINALS
Participants in the Grand Finals will be informed through telegram and registered mail. They will compete through an on-the-spot cooking demo to be held at the Megatrade Hall 3, SM Megamall on March 29, 2003 for the Student Division & March 30, 2003 for the Amateur Division.

The following judging criteria will be used for both divisions:
Innovation - 20 pts.
Plating and Presentation - 20 pts.
Preparation - 10pts.
Taste - 50 pts.

CULINARY MEET 2003 PRIZES

A. AMATEUR DIVISION

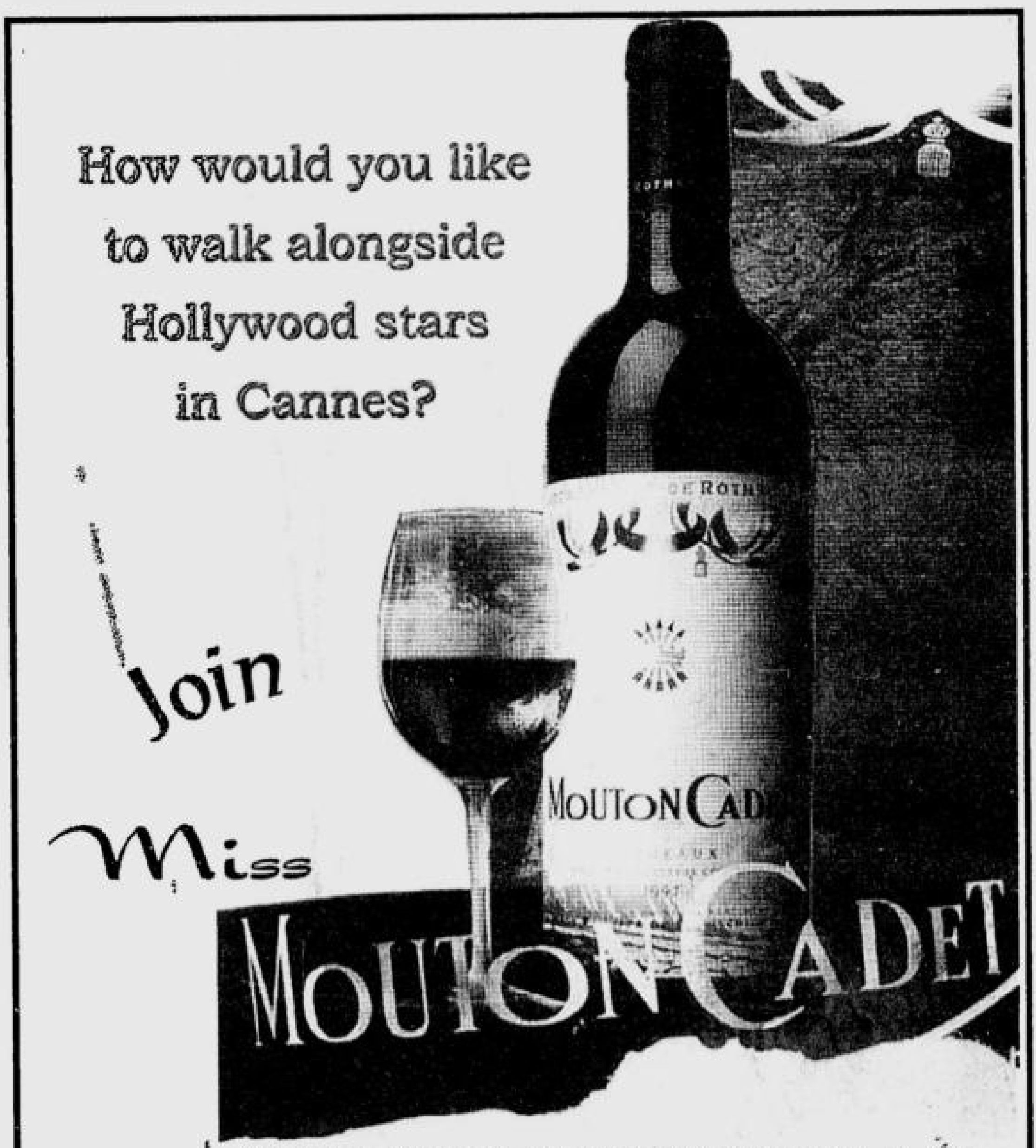
GRAND PRIZE: Php 20,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaque
1st RUNNER-UP: Php 10,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaque
2nd RUNNER-UP: Php 5,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaque
3rd RUNNER-UP: Php 2,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaque

B. STUDENT DIVISION (CATEGORY 1 & 2)

GRAND PRIZE: Php 10,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaques
1st RUNNER-UP: Php 5,000.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaques
2nd RUNNER-UP: Php 2,500.00 cash plus, Php 1,000 worth of Century products, gift packs and plaques

In association with:
Media partners:
BFAD Permit #1131 Series of 2002

APPLICATION FORM
Name: ____ Age: ____
Home Address: ____ Tel.: ____
Company/School(name & address): ____ Cellphone: ____
Course/Year(if studying): ____ Birthdate: ____
Occupation(if employed): ____ Title of entry: ____
(please attach entry)
DIVISION (Please check appropriate box)
☐ A. AMATEUR - "PASTA TUNA PASTA" OR "CENTURY RICE TOPPINGS"
☐ B. STUDENT - "CENTURY TUNA FUN DINING" ____Category 1: "Appetizer Platter" ____Category 2: "Turnovers and Potpies"



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Italian, with a passion

ITALY is known for its distinctive cuisine. It offers dishes that are virtually seductive combinations of aphrodisiac ingredients with distinctive flavors and scents.

Of course, offering your loved one a perfect meal made from the finest, most authentic ingredients is seductive enough.

Perhaps it's appropriate that the words "passion" and "pasta" start with the same letter. And nobody makes pasta better than the Italians.

Federici of Amelia, in Italy's prime pasta-making region, is the country's best-selling pasta. It is made available in the Philippines through Fly Ace Corporation.

The company also distributes locally Pietro Coricelli, the most popular Italian olive oil brand. Located in central Italy's olive oil region of Umbria, Pietro Coricelli combines new ideas, tradition and innovation. It has the largest variety of premium gourmet oils with specialty products ranging from organic extra virgin to three flavored varieties and oils specially formulated for cooking.

For very special Valentine creations, food writer, chef and cooking teacher Vicky Veloso-Barrera, suggests starting with the finest and most authentic ingredients like Federici pasta and Pietro Coricelli olive oil, available at groceries and supermarkets nationwide.

Doña Elena
ANCHOVIES
Doña Maria
OLIVES
SLICED BLACK
Doña Maria
OLIVES
PITTED GREEN
Pietro Coricelli
CondiExtra

CROSTINI with black olives, green olives or tomatoes

Crostini d'olivi neri, olivi verdi con pomodoro

(Crostini with black olives, green olives or tomatoes)

1 long baguette (thin French bread)

¼ c Pietro Coricelli olive oil

2 cloves of garlic, minced

Preheat the oven to 350ºF. Cut the baguette into ½-inch slices and lay them on ungreased baking sheets. Combine the Pietro Coricelli olive oil and garlic and brush over each piece of bread. Toast for about ten minutes or until crisp. Let cool. Store in airtight containers.

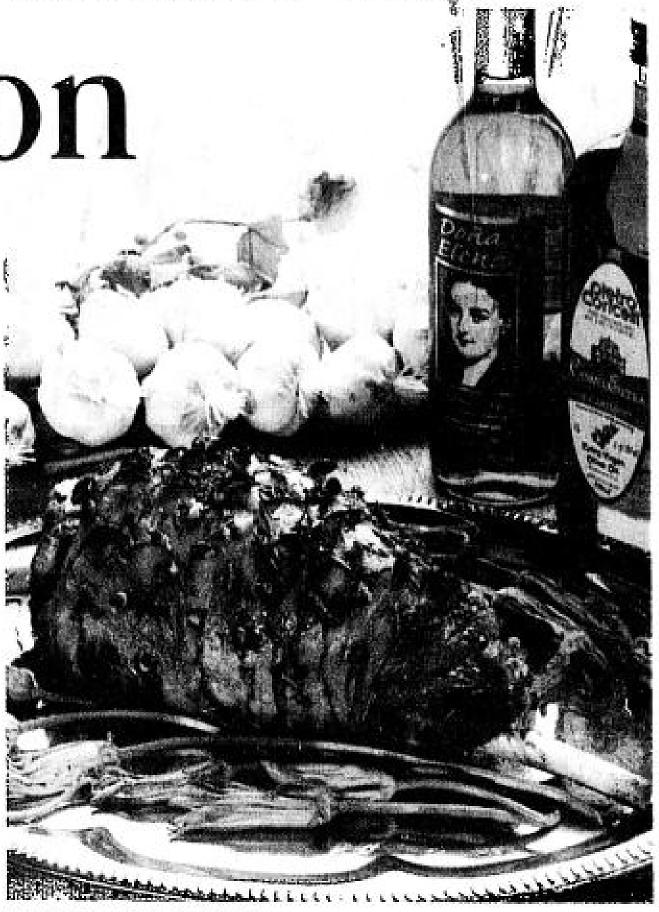
Black Oil Spread

2/3 c pitted Dona Maria black olives

2 fillets Doña Elena anchovies

2 tbsp Pietro Coricelli extra virgin olive oil

black pepper to taste



ROAST leg of Lamb with Rosemary

Process all ingredients in a food processor. Spread on crostini just before serving.

Green Olive Spread

2/3 c Doña Maria green olives

¼ c pitted Doña Maria black olives

2 tbsp Pietro Coricelli extra virgin olive oil

black pepper to taste

Process all the ingredients in a food processor. Spread on crostini just before serving.

Tomato Spread

3 or 4 medium-sized, very ripe tomatoes, diced

1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped

2 tbsp Pietro Coricelli extra virgin olive oil

coarse salt and ground pepper to taste

Combine and use as a topping for the crostini.

Penne al Funghi (Penne with Mushroom Cream Sauce)

500 g Federici penne

¼ c pure Pietro Coricelli olive oil

½ head of native garlic, peeled and left whole

1 large or 2 small onions, chopped

200 g forest ham, diced

150 g fresh chanterelle mushrooms, ends trimmed and large pieces halved

½ c whipping cream (must be an imported brand like Elle e Vire, M&D or Anchor because these are more "liquid" than local ones), more if necessary

2/3 c grated Parmesan cheese

¼ tsp rock salt (the ordinary kind from the sari-sari store)

¼ tsp black pepper

Cook the Federici penne in salted boiling water until al dente. Meanwhile, heat the Pietro Coricelli olive oil in a heavy saucepan and add the garlic cloves and onion. Cook for one minute, then add ham and mushrooms, cooking for five minutes (ham should brown slightly). Turn off the heat and add cream (more if sauce is not creamy enough), cheese, salt and pepper. Drain the Federici pasta and toss immediately with sauce. Serve right away.

Roast Leg of Lamb with Rosemary

1 small leg of lamb (about 2 kg)

1 or 2 whole heads garlic, peeled

¼ c Pietro Coricelli olive oil

¼ c Dona Elena white wine

1 tbsp rosemary

ground pepper

Gravy

2 tbsp butter

2 tbsp flour

1 c beef broth

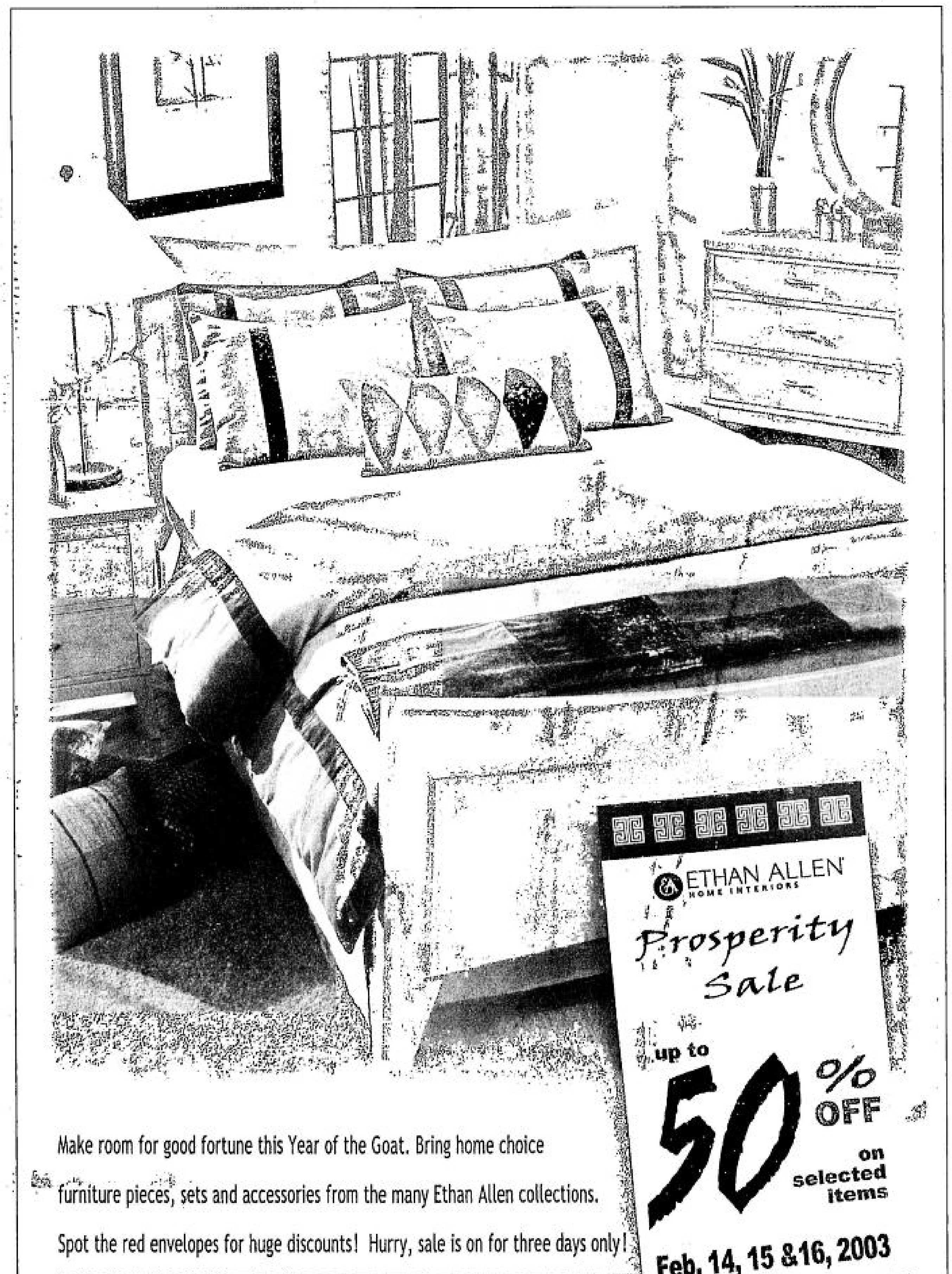
salt and pepper to taste

Pierce the leg of lamb all over with the tip of a small sharp knife and insert a clove of garlic into each slit. Drizzle the lamb with Pietro Coricelli olive oil and Doña Elena wine, sprinkle all over with the rosemary and pepper. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator several hours. Roast in a 400° oven for 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours, depending on the size of the lamb.

Meanwhile, prepare the base for the gravy. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the flour. Cook until the flour is bubbly. Add the beef broth and cook until thickened. When the lamb is done, transfer the lamb to a serving dish. Scrape all the browned bits in the baking pan and pour everything, bits and juices, into the gravy base. (You may want to skim off some of the melted fat first.) Stir well together over medium heat and season with salt and pepper. Serves 12.

Federici
PASTA
Pietro Coricelli
CondiExtra

PENNE with Mushroom Cream Sauce



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